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The magazine for America



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Legion

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COURAGE UNDER FIRE

Adm. Chester W. Nimitz pins the Navy Cross on Mess Attendant 2nd Class Doris "Dorie" Miller on board USS *Enterprise* at Pearl Harbor on May 27, 1942. In January, the Navy announced it will name a *Ford*-class aircraft carrier for Miller, one of the first heroes of World War II. **See Page 44.** U.S. Navy

The American Legion Magazine, a leader among national general-interest publications, is published monthly by The American Legion for its nearly 2 million members. These wartime veterans, working through 12,000 community-level posts, dedicate themselves to God and Country and traditional American values; strong national security; adequate and compassionate care for veterans, their widows and orphans; community service; and the wholesome development of our nation's youth.



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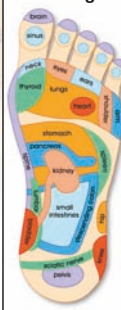


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Photo by Ryan Young

'Wanted: Your Brain'

I want to thank Jeff Stoffer for writing this article (January). I signed up to donate my brain and passed the information on to friends on Facebook. I've always felt that priority should be given to brain research over space exploration, though I believe both are good. If we spent as much money on studying the brain as we do on military spending, we might figure out how to end wars and all their devastation.

—Gwen Ginocchio, Costa Mesa, Calif.

The need for brain research also applies to other brain disorders, currently the new frontier in medicine. Mental health is the third most common illness in our country. Learning about brain disorders not only helps science and society in general, but helps the individual patient's family now and in the future. Many mental disorders have a genetic link, including various forms of addiction, degenerative disorders like Parkinson's, dementia, Alzheimer's disease and other disorders with balance issues. Brain donation permits study of the brain under the microscope and the connections of various parts of the brain involved in a disorder.

—Gilbert Lawrence, M.D., Utica, N.Y.,
co-author of "Your Happy Brain
and How to Hug It" (Amazon)

'Jackpot'

I was overwhelmed with pride when I read Alan W. Dowd's

account of the elimination of Islamic State leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi (January), especially his statement that the operation "re-reminds the world that the United States can be tenacious and patient; that our political system can sustain long, twilight struggles; and that our military will do anything to liberate the oppressed, rescue the helpless and avenge our fallen."

Sometimes our government and military hit the nail on the head, in this case naming the operation in memory of Kayla Mueller, one of the terrorist swine's victims. As Dowd said, this sends "a powerful signal that America's memory and reach are long." I pray that it will always be thus.

—Tom Castor, Chillicothe, Ohio

It is important that this monster al-Baghdadi, leader of the Islamic terrorist group ISIS, was found and destroyed.

As I was reading about the time and effort involved in tracking down al-Baghdadi, the thought occurred to me to follow the money. These murdering monsters are not buying guns, steel- and concrete-reinforced hideouts, etc., with their own hard-earned money. Somebody is financing all this. Find out who and cut it off at the source.

— Don Peterson, Brownsdale, Minn.

Great article about Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, but you forgot to mention a key element of the task force that conducted the raid: Night Stalkers. Our Special Operations ground forces do not get to a target without the only special ops helicopter unit: the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment. We provide precision fire support and delivery plus or minus 30 seconds. The 160th has provided support for every special ops mission since 9/11; we don't go anywhere without Delta or Rangers and they don't go anywhere without us. I spent 15 years as an AH-6 Little Bird pilot in the 160th.

— Greg Coker, Graham, Texas

'Hidden Killer'

Martin Sayers has written an article that can save lives (Living Well, January). I contracted sepsis at 68 through my elbow, where I developed a golf-ball-sized lump. My main symptom was extreme nausea. Early one Sunday my wife took me to the hospital, where I was flown to another. I spent 10 days there with a fever, swollen limbs, kidney and liver failure, and an

irregular heart rate. I then went by EMS to a nursing home for eight days of physical therapy, followed by 18 days of IV therapy at the hospital. I got up and going with a walker, then a cane. There was talk of amputating my right arm.

Early treatment is crucial. I am fortunate to be alive.

— Steve Thompson, Rockford, Ohio

A few months ago, my right arm was mauled by a feral cat. Within two hours it hurt beyond belief, red and swelling.

When I was admitted to the hospital, the physician diagnosed sepsis and began a heavy antibiotics regimen via a portal in each arm. It lasted five days until my blood work showed a notable lowering of bacterial infection response. They had me watch videos about sepsis. One got my attention as it described amputation and even death in serious cases.

— Melissa E. Osborne, Camden, S.C.

On Sept. 4, 2018, I had the second of two spinal surgeries to alleviate a service-connected injury. The operation went well and from all indications did what it was supposed to. Two weeks later, I had sepsis. I was placed on massive doses of intravenous antibiotics and over the next 10 days took three more trips through the operating room to reopen, clean and disinfect the surgery wound. I was also on a machine that circulated a sterile solution to keep the wound clean and disinfected. At one point, they thought they had lost me. (I told our daughter

later, "Grumpy old Marines don't kill that easily.")

I was eventually discharged from the hospital and sent home, attached to a "wound VAC" machine, a battery-operated pump with a tube embedded in the wound to produce negative pressure in the wound to keep it clean. It was predicted I would be on the machine three to four weeks; it became three months because the wound wouldn't heal due to the infection.

After arriving home, I reported daily to a local hospital for massive injections of an antibiotic through a PICC tube in my upper arm. After 30 days, the tube was removed and I was put on oral antibiotics. Three times a week, nurses cleaned and serviced the VAC machine and repacked the wound. I eventually saw a wound specialist who worked on it and got it to begin healing. On April 10, 2019, he said the wound was healed enough that I no longer needed a dressing. During all those months, I reported to the hospital daily to have the dressing changed.

Apparently I have no lasting effects from the sepsis. I will, however, take oral antibiotics daily for the rest of my life.

— Gene Gausman, Milford, Neb.

'This We Believe'

E. Roy Stone Jr.'s reprinted essay (December) is absolutely excellent. I thoroughly enjoyed and appreciated it. As someone who served in Vietnam, I am greatly thankful for what the Legion does for us.

— Ralph E. Cross, Dallas

THE AMERICAN LEGION MAGAZINE WELCOMES YOUR OPINIONS

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Buddies check on one another

From the first day of military training, veterans are taught to look after one another. Whether it's promising that we have their "six" or conducting a health and welfare check, our comrades need to know we care about their well-being.

More and more American Legion posts are conducting Buddy Checks for this reason. Membership is our lifeblood, but it is our camaraderie that makes us an organization worth joining.

How can we truly serve veterans if we are unaware of their most urgent needs? How can we call ourselves a family if we don't provide a welcoming environment? Most of all, how can we pledge to "sanctify our comradeship" at every American Legion meeting while ignoring veterans living in our own neighborhoods?

Few people have the time to personally reach out to all veterans in their communities, but teamwork makes it possible. For instance, if a group of 10 Legionnaires commits to calling or visiting 10 other members or former members, you can reach 100 veterans.

National Headquarters offers some tools to help you succeed. At **mylegion.org**, you can download the names of current members and those whose memberships may have lapsed.

Turn Buddy Check calls into a post event, and magnify your message by inviting local media. While our primary concern is the well-being of veterans in our communities, an increase in membership usually results. Veterans tend to enjoy the company of other veterans. There is no bad time to conduct a Buddy Check, but I can't think of a more appropriate way to celebrate The American Legion's birthday, March 15-17, than by reconnecting with our fellow veterans.

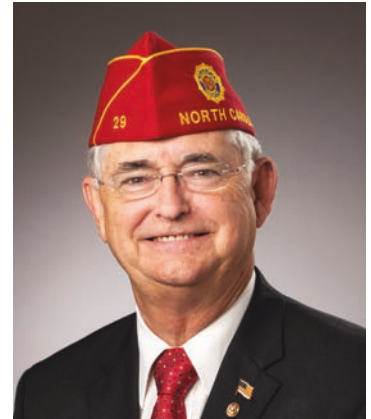
Thanks to the LEGION Act, anybody currently serving or who has served honorably under federal orders since Dec. 7, 1941, is eligible to join our organization. That includes the many reservists and National Guard members who were deployed or went through basic and military occupational training. An estimated 4.2 million veterans are eligible to join The American Legion who were not eligible a year ago. Early indications are that membership is up this year, so let's keep that momentum by sharing our mission and passion with those who were previously ineligible.

The LEGION Act has also expanded membership opportunities in the American Legion Auxiliary and Sons of The American Legion. The Auxiliary, by the way, is no longer the nation's largest patriotic women's organization, but the largest veterans auxiliary of women and men.

Let me say again that membership is not the purpose of the Buddy Check. Through personal contact, though, you may be helping a veteran battling suicidal thoughts, a single parent looking for temporary financial assistance or a transitioning servicemember struggling to obtain VA benefits. Let them know they have a friend in The American Legion and that you are willing to assist them or connect them to someone who can. Be sure to follow up.

To be an effective Buddy Checker, just remember two things: Call because you can, and listen because you want to.

James W. "Bill" Oxford



National Commander
James W. "Bill" Oxford

MEMORANDA

WASHINGTON CONFERENCE

The 60th Washington Conference will be March 8-11, when members of the American Legion Family will visit Capitol Hill to meet with their representatives. Workshops and other activities are also planned.

Highlights will include the "Know Before You Go" legislative briefing, the Commander's Call, and National Commander Bill Oxford's testimony before Congress. Watch the national website for the latest schedule, news and live streams.

[legion.org/
washingtonconference](http://legion.org/washingtonconference)

AMERICAN LEGION BIRTHDAY

March 15-17 marks The American Legion's 101st birthday. A suggested speech is available at **legion.org/publications**.

The Centennial Celebration site at **legion.org/centennial** is permanent, and tools are still available to add to – or create – a post history page to share with your community. Another tool to share American Legion history is a series of Fathead wall clings; they can be viewed in detail and ordered at **emblem.legion.org**.

Be sure to share a recap of your post's birthday events online at **legiontown.org**.

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FOR DISABLED VETERANS



**I was about to give up...
I wouldn't have known where to go.**

*Korean War Army veteran Willie Alvin Cousin,
who received long-overdue and wrongly denied
VA disability benefits after his case was reopened
and won by American Legion Department
Service Officer K. Robert Lewis*

FOR MILITARY AND VETERAN FAMILIES IN NEED



**These were important things.
It helped them not get behind
in their rent... It helped them
put food in the refrigerator.**

*Coast Guard Vice Commandant Adm. Charlie Ray
after American Legion Temporary Financial Assistance
helped more than 3,120 children whose active-duty families
were affected by the federal government shutdown*



Your gift provides hope for disabled veterans and children in need.

The American Legion Veterans & Children Foundation, formerly the American Legion Endowment Fund, delivers vital financial support for service officers worldwide who are working on VA disability claims for more than 700,000 U.S. military veterans at any one time, all the time. The fund also supplies American Legion Temporary Financial Assistance cash grants for military and veteran families with minor children at home, who have encountered hardships beyond their control and need short-term help covering the costs of shelter, food, utilities, clothing or other necessities.



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YOUR AMERICAN LEGION AT WORK

“Finally, the 4.7 million Americans who left their homes to deploy to a country most had never visited, fight in a war they did not start, and were willing to die for peace and liberty for people they did not know, will be honored at this magnificent spot in our nation’s capital.”

U.S. World War One Centennial Commission Chairman Terry Hamby, after a mid-December gathering in Washington, D.C., to break ground on the American Legion-supported National World War I Memorial



SERVING YOUTH

173

American Legion Junior Shooting Sports teams registered to compete in the 2019-2020 season



\$9,581

Amount in American Legion Temporary Financial Assistance funds distributed in December to help needy veteran and military families with minor children at home. Families use the grants to maintain shelter, utilities, food and clothing in times of financial hardship beyond their control.

SERVING VETERANS

1 million

Minimum number of holiday wreaths placed at veteran grave markers by Dec. 14. American Legion posts throughout the nation participated in numerous Wreaths Across America remembrance activities, including placing more than 7,200 wreaths in one effort led by the American Legion Riders of District 8 in Wisconsin.



848

Number of VA hearing presentations prepared for veterans by national American Legion claims specialists in December

\$2,500

Amount in American Legion National Emergency Fund grants awarded in December after flooding in Texas and New York

29,100

Hours of American Legion video viewing time on the national organization's YouTube channel in 2019

375,540

Membership in Sons of The American Legion at the end of 2019, an all-time record and an increase of 4,520 members from the previous year

5

Percentage increase in number of page views of the national American Legion website in 2019, compared to previous year



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MARRI KRUPCO

Marri Krupco saw her family's grocery store in Blue Mound, Kan., close. Then the local school. She vowed to not let the same happen to Mooney-Long American Legion Post 279.

About seven years ago, declining membership threatened the post's charter. As adjutant, Krupco led a revitalization that nearly tripled membership in two months.

In June, Post 279 will turn 100, which she sees as a perfect occasion to celebrate Blue Mound's "small-town patriotism and how important veterans are to the community – and how important it is for those veterans to join and keep the post alive."

Krupco's determination to recruit new members and retain others continued as district commander, when she led the 2nd District to maintain the highest percent of quota every week of the membership year.

"I set out to do 20 years of (military) service, but it did not work out that way. This is one way I can continue to serve active-duty families. Helping not just my post but posts across the state is very rewarding to me."

She's proud of her hometown of Blue Mound, and just as proud of her post.

"We are not set in our ways. We're making a new path. We're willing to accept new ideas and do something new for our community."

– Henry Howard

"I am active in the Legion because it's a way for me to continue to serve veterans, my community, my country."

BRANCH OF SERVICE Navy (1998-2002)

RANK Electrician's mate second class

MILITARY JOB Nuclear propulsion plant operator/electrical

AMERICAN LEGION POST Mooney-Long Post 279, Blue Mound, Kan.

YEARS IN THE LEGION 20

AMERICAN LEGION ACTIVITIES

- National Security Council member (2019-present)
- Department vice commander (2019-present)
- Department membership chairman (2019-present)
- District commander (2018-2019)
- Post adjutant (2009-present)

Watch an interview of Marri Krupco online:

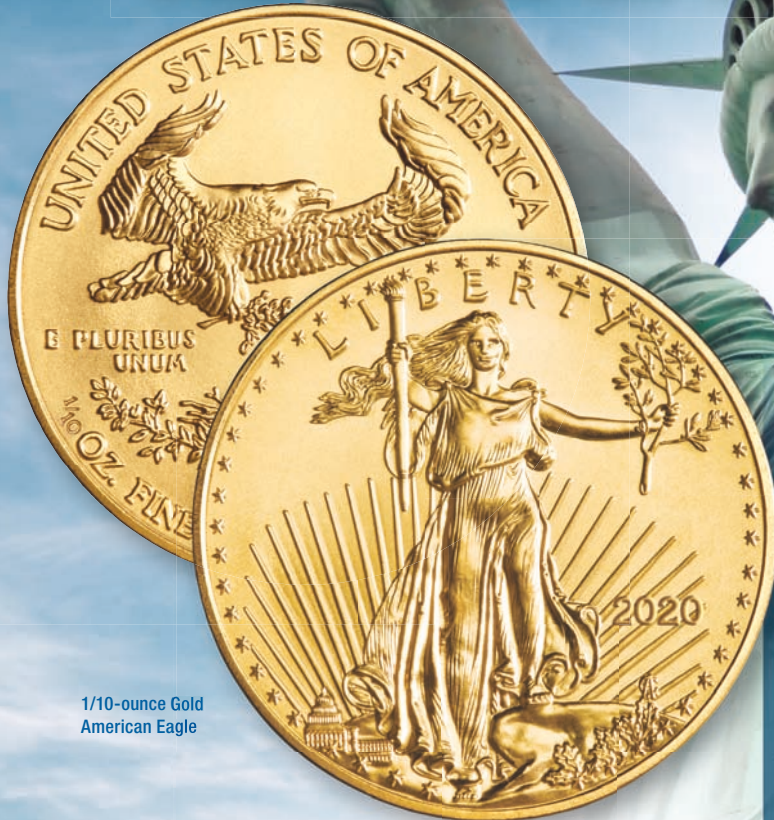
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U.S. policy toward Iran



SUPPORT

Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla.

■ Rubio is a member of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence.



OPPOSE

Rep. Jim McGovern, D-Mass.

■ McGovern is chairman of the House Committee on Rules.

U.S. policy toward Iran is a critical component of our foreign engagement in the Middle East. The goal is straightforward: an Iran that lives in harmony with its neighbors, has abandoned its pursuit of nuclear weapons and does not fund terrorism globally.

How can the United States achieve this? It requires imposing crushing economic sanctions to deter future actions that harm Americans or American interests, while leaving the door open for serious diplomacy. There must also be accountability for Iran's adventurism in Syria and Iraq, as well as for those responsible for the repression of the Iranian people.

This is the strategy President Trump and his administration are actively pursuing. It is why the president authorized, at the guidance of his national security team, the killing of terrorist Qassem Soleimani and the disruption of a near-term plot that could have killed dozens, if not hundreds, of Americans.

This action marked an overdue shift in our foreign policy toward Iran. After murdering a U.S. contractor in Iraq, an Iranian-backed militia stormed our embassy compound in Baghdad. Iran concluded that it could go further than ever before in directly attacking – or hiding behind proxies to attack – Americans.

Soleimani and the mullahs believed they could run roughshod over the Middle East, taking out anyone who got in their way. This time, they miscalculated. It is not a mistake they should make again, because the United States is committed to restoring active deterrence – effective deterrence – against future attacks on our nation and its people.

On Jan. 9, I voted in favor of a simple yet timeless premise: the United States should not go to war unless Congress authorizes it.

Article I of the Constitution places the power to declare war firmly in the hands of Congress.

Period. Article II names the president commander in chief of our armed forces. Since our founding, no matter what party occupied the White House or held the majority in Congress, we have wrestled over this division of power. I believe

this is as the framers intended. Decisions as important as war and peace should be made only by both branches working together in the national interest.

Qassem Soleimani was a ruthless military commander who had targeted U.S. troops in Iraq, but the decision to kill him was made not only without congressional authorization but without even informing Congress. Certainly we do not mourn Soleimani's death, but the immediate effect of the targeted U.S. drone strike that killed him in Baghdad has been the strengthening of Iranian hardliners, a pause in the fight against the Islamic State (ISIS), and the deployment of thousands more U.S. troops to the Persian Gulf – and everyone agrees there is more to come.

Americans deserve to have their voice heard in matters of war and peace. Our troops deserve the respect of a public debate that demands answers and insists on a strategy before they are sent into harm's way. And finally, our Constitution demands that our leaders stand up for the fundamental values that set the United States apart from other nations. Those who have paid the ultimate price for our freedom deserve nothing less.

THE HEART OF THE ISSUE

Advocates of a resolution to limit the president's ability to strike Iran say the killing of Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps commander Qassem Soleimani has backfired. Supporters of the strike call it deterrence.

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What happens when your medication is recalled?



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Recalls for prescription and over-the-counter medications happen all the time. Sometimes it's labeling issue; other times a medication is recalled because it puts the patient's health and safety at risk. However, just hearing about a recall doesn't mean you need to toss your medication.

"Do not panic," says Delaney Ivy, PharmD, primary care pharmacist and clinical assistant professor of pharmacy practice at the Texas A&M Irma Lerma Rangel College of Pharmacy. "Many times a recall only impacts a certain batch of pills, so you may be in the clear."

What is a drug recall? A drug manufacturer recalls a prescription or over-the-counter drug with the intent to remove it from the market. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has the authority to issue drug recalls, but it is rare for the agency to recall on its own.

"Most people find out about a drug recall from the news," Ivy says. "They are normally very reliable at reporting recalls. However, the FDA also posts them to its website."

Different types of drug recalls Medication recalls usually happen when something to do with the drug can potentially risk a patient's safety and health – an incorrect label, possible contamination of ingredients or the medication needing to be sent back to the manufacturer.

There are three major classifications of recalls: Class I, II and III. Class I recalls are the most serious. They often put the patient at a risk of serious health issues, even death. They can include anything from a labeling mix-up on a lifesaving drug to undeclared allergens.

The second most serious drug recall is Class II. These

drugs may cause temporary health problems or pose a slight threat of a serious health issue. An example of this type of recall is a drug that is not strong enough to treat the issue, but the issue is not life-threatening.

A Class III recall occurs when a drug is unlikely to cause a health reaction, but the labeling or manufacturing violates FDA regulations. This violation could be due to incorrect packaging or contaminations minor enough to not affect a patient's health.

Steps to take when your medication is recalled

"The first thing to do if you believe your medication has been recalled is to contact the pharmacy that filled your prescription," Ivy says. "Not every batch of pills falls under the recall. Your pharmacy will be able to quickly tell you if the pills you received are included."

For recalled over-the-counter medication, match the lot numbers of your medication to those included in the recall. If you cannot find a number on the packaging, take the medication to your pharmacist.

"If your medication is truly recalled, stop taking it immediately but not without talking to your health-care provider or pharmacist," Ivy says. "Because it can be hazardous to suddenly stop taking certain medications, your pharmacist will work quickly to replace your pills or get you an alternate prescription."

Medications are recalled all the time, so don't be afraid to ask questions. "Your pharmacist is on your team," Ivy says. "Ask if you believe your medication is included in a recall. They will know what to do and how to help you."

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Living Well is designed to provide general information. It is not intended to be, nor is it, medical advice. Readers should consult their physicians when they have health problems.



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1. Methodology: Phone surveys at regular intervals with COPD patients using the InCourage system, as part of a subset of the overall RespirTech bronchiectasis outcomes registry. Data collection began in 2013. As of 11/31/18, 154 patients completed the baseline survey; 108 patients in 1-month cohort; 89 in 3-month cohort; 70 in 6-month cohort; 43 in 12-month cohort.



Photo by Ben Mikesell

71

Units collected from 71 donors at the 101st American Legion National Convention blood drive in Indianapolis, the highest number by a wide margin since convention blood drives started in 2015

Foods to fight INFLAMMATION

The best way to ward off inflammation is a lifetime program to keep cellular inflammation under control in each location of the body, says research scientist Barry Sears of the Inflammation Research Foundation.

That starts with eating habits that protect against too much inflammation. As Sears writes in *Healthy Living Made Simple*, an online magazine, these include:

- Protein at every meal.
- Finishing all your vegetables.
- Taking daily fish oil supplements.
- Small meals throughout the day to stave off hunger spikes.
- More non-starchy vegetables and fruits.
- Fewer grains and starches.
- Avoiding pro-inflammatory fats rich in either palmitic acid (like butter or lard) or omega-6 fats (like those in vegetable oils).
- Foods rich in monounsaturated fats, such as olive oil, nuts and avocados; polyphenols (chemicals that give fruits and vegetables their color) and fermentable fiber (found in non-starchy vegetables and selected fruits); and omega-3 fatty acids such as fish oils.



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Blue-light blues

So-called blue light – the light generated by mobile-phone screens, computer screens, tablet screens, high-efficiency fluorescent light bulbs and LED TV screens – may have a serious negative effect on health.

According to a Harvard Medical School report, exposure to such light during and immediately before normal sleeping hours “throws the body’s biological clock – the circadian rhythm – out of whack,” possibly contributing to cancer, diabetes, heart disease and obesity.

The main reason is that blue light is a potent suppressor of melatonin, the body’s natural sleep-related hormone. Preliminary evidence suggests that lower melatonin levels might explain the association with cancer.

Blue-light exposure may also be connected to diabetes. Researchers put 10 people on a schedule that gradually shifted the timing of their circadian rhythms. Their blood sugar levels increased, putting them into a prediabetic state. Levels of leptin, a hormone that leaves people feeling full after a meal, went down.

Other research has linked shortened sleep to increased risk for depression and cardiovascular problems.

The report also notes that blue-light wavelengths, which are also produced by the sun, are beneficial during daylight hours because they boost attention, reaction times and mood. But the “proliferation of electronics with screens, as well as energy-efficient lighting, is increasing our exposure ... especially after sundown.”

To protect yourself from the harmful effects of blue light during evening hours, Harvard researchers recommend:

- Using dim red lights at nighttime. “Red light has the least power to shift circadian rhythm and suppress melatonin.”
- Avoiding use of bright screens two to three hours before going to bed.
- Wearing blue-blocking glasses, or installing an app that filters the blue/green wavelength at night.
- Exposing yourself to bright light throughout the day, “which will boost your ability to sleep at night, as well as your mood and alertness during daylight.”

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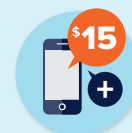
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Sgt. Brandy Lam-Hamer assists Maj. Gen. Tracy Norris, adjutant general of the Texas National Guard, as she stretches at Camp Mabry in Austin, Texas. Lam-Hamer plans to use the Army Credentialing Assistance program to become a master trainer.

Photo by Chelsea Purgahn

A BOOT IN THE DOOR

The Army offers soldiers an innovative way to get ahead without going to college – at no cost.

BY KEN OLSEN

For a decade after graduating from college, Sgt. Brandy Lam-Hamer paid her bills with a sales job while trying to land a position as a purchasing manager – without success. “My bachelor’s degree didn’t mean a thing,” says Lam-Hamer, a medic in the Texas Army National Guard. “All that experience didn’t do me any good. When it came down to it, I wasn’t credentialed.”

She left the corporate world with plans to become a teacher when the National Guard offered her a full-time job at Camp Mayberry, Texas, and

an all-expenses-paid opportunity to earn the type of professional credentials she’d needed to get her dream job in the civilian world. She immediately signed up for the personal fitness training course.

“It’s more education I can get for free,” says Lam-Hamer, one of the first to enroll in the Army’s new credentialing assistance program. “This program pays for everything on the front end. The Army mails the textbooks to your front door.”

Lam-Hamer is on track to become a master fitness trainer in the Texas National Guard.

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"I would not have the confidence to help these soldiers without this certification," Lam-Hamer says. "Many have injuries. Many have high blood pressure. Thanks to this program, I have the training to help people safely."

Credentialing assistance is a good alternative for soldiers who aren't well-suited for a traditional college education or are dissuaded by the price tag. And it allows servicemembers to save their tuition assistance benefits for their children to use.

"I think the Army nailed it with this program," Lam-Hamer says. "Credentials make you so much more valuable in the job market. Here's a great way to get it at no cost, and you aren't obligated to your employer."

'A REALLY GOOD PRODUCT' The American Legion has championed credentialing assistance for more than 20 years. This includes conducting national summits on the issue and advocating for civilian employers, government agencies and licensing authorities to credit soldiers for extensive training they receive in areas such as emergency medicine, hazardous materials handling and technology. In addition, the Legion has pushed for changes to the GI Bill that allow servicemembers and veterans to use their education benefits for a broader range of technical and vocational training.

Credentialing assistance was a personal mission for Dan Dailey during his tenure as sergeant major of the Army from January 2015 to August 2019. The Army has long provided tuition assistance, he says. However, less than 20 percent of soldiers take the college track. "So the question becomes, what is the Army doing for the soldiers – the more than 80 percent – who aren't going to college?"

The answer, based on careful analysis of labor market data, became credentialing assistance. "Only about 30 percent of the jobs in America require a traditional college education," Dailey says. "The majority are skilled and unskilled labor." The civilian sector responded with professional licensing and credentialing. The Army needed to catch up.

Credentialing helps soldiers advance in their military careers while preparing them for future civilian careers. "The fact is, 100 percent of us are going to leave the Army someday," Dailey says. Soldiers in highly skilled specialties – electricians, plumbers and welders – have an easier time making the transition to good-paying civilian jobs. That's a tiny fraction of the fighting force. "The majority of the Army – about 61 percent – is combat arms," Dailey adds. There's no civilian

equivalent for that set of military occupational specialties (MOS). So the Army worked with Congress, the Department of Labor and others to build the credentialing assistance program.

"The Army wants soldiers to stay in the Army," says Mike Engen, the educational services officer who launched the credentialing assistance program at Fort Hood, Texas. "At the same time, if a soldier decides to leave the Army, we want them to leave happy. There is no better ambassador for the Army."

That matches Dailey's vision. "We want our soldiers to be employed," he says. "We want them to be prominent citizens back in the hometowns of America. The best way to recruit is to show them a really good product on the way out the door."

PILOT TEST The Army launched a limited user test in October 2018 that offered 28 credentialing options to soldiers stationed at Fort Hood – an ideal location because there's a large number of soldiers with a diverse MOS cross-section – as well as Guardsmen and reservists throughout the state. The program expanded to include Fort Campbell and Kentucky National Guard members and reservists last June, and an additional 13 states came online between October and December. The credentialing assistance rollout to the remaining states and territories began Jan. 1.

The Army pays for the training costs associated with a servicemember's participation in the credentialing assistance program, including textbooks, reference guides, test preparation, certification exams and recertification.

"If they want a new career in plumbing or as an electrician, they can go from start to finish," says Mary Lantz, education services specialist for the Texas National Guard.

The No. 1 reason people join the Guard is education. And the breadth of the credentialing assistance benefit sets it apart from other programs. "Tuition assistance covers this kind of training at community college, but it doesn't cover (certification) test preparation or the credentialing exam," Lantz says.

The credentialing assistance is program-voluntary. Soldiers take the classes in their off-duty time. While many credentialing courses are offered online or in the classroom, the training in more trade-oriented fields – such as auto mechanics – is hands-on. Certification tests are administered by the professional credentialing organization for each expertise, whether it's plumbing or project management.

I am an American Soldier.



James V. Griffin



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Some of the most popular credentialing choices among soldiers during the limited user test were project management professional, personal fitness trainer, and a process improvement and problem-solving course called Lean Six Sigma, Engen says. For Guard members and reservists, the top picks were personal fitness trainer, electrician, plumber and project management professional, Lantz says. But she also helped one Guardsman enroll in the solar specialist credentialing course and take the master electrician's licensing exam. (If soldiers have the required number of hours working in a trade, they can take the licensing exam without taking the credentialing classes.)

Now soldiers, Guard members and reservists can choose from almost 1,700 credentialing options, from welding to IT specialist. The credential must relate to an Army MOS, but it doesn't have to match the soldier's MOS or current duties. "This is yet another way the Army is promoting the personal and professional development of its soldiers, and helping get our folks involved in education," Engen says. "If you can demonstrate your skills through certification, that can be as valuable as earning a degree." Soldiers can earn certifications without using their GI Bill benefits, giving them the option to use those funds to earn a college degree in the future.

Some of the other services provide credentialing programs as well, says Ken Hardy, chief of the Educational Services Branch for the Army National Guard. Of them, the Army program is the most generous. "The Navy doesn't pay for the training, only the (credentialing) test. And the Air Force has a \$4,500 lifetime cap," Hardy says. "The Army is providing up to \$4,000 every year, so members (Guardsmen) can also use the program to get recertified."

The biggest challenge is getting the word out about credentialing assistance, Hardy says.

EARLY SUCCESS Approximately two-thirds of participants in the credentialing assistance pilot at Fort Hood were enlisted, and the other third were officers, from privates to colonels, Engen says.

"Even though I'm hoping to do 20 years in the military, when I get out I'm Mr. Williams with nothing but military experience," says Capt. Tusaine R. Williams, a military police commander at Fort Hood who joined the Army in 2005. "We are all trained cops on post. But most places outside the military won't accept our training. We have to take POST (Police Officer Standards and Training) certification. With credentialing, we're

getting the civilian equivalent certification for the things we already trained to do."

Williams is looking beyond law enforcement as well. He took the project-management professional credentialing course last spring. Not only will it help him progress to a new civilian career, "it highlighted a lot of things we do in the military."

Credentialing assistance is even attracting officers with multiple degrees. Maj. Demetrios Mack, who has served 25 years in the Army, also enrolled in the project-management program because he discovered having an MBA with an emphasis in project management isn't enough. "The actual certification in project management is what gives you the letters behind your name, that the industry recognizes and civilian employers require," Mack says.

He's now considering taking other credentialing courses such as Microsoft Office Solutions and Lean Six Sigma. "I think those are applicable to my career path," he says.

Chief Warrant Officer 4 Frank Cox is putting the project-management training he received through credentialing assistance to work in his day job as an Apache attack helicopter instructor pilot for the Army Aviation Support Facility at Ellington Field in Houston. But it also helps in his duties in the Texas National Guard, where he oversees training and evaluation for the 1-149th Attack Reconnaissance Battalion. He was planning to take project-management training on his own when the Army unveiled the credentialing pilot in Texas, because part of his job is estimating resources for and coordinating training. "It's directly applicable to what I do every day," Cox says.

He also sees applications for project management in the civilian workplace. "It doesn't matter what industry you are in," he says. "The tools and techniques are the same."

Lam-Hamer is using credentialing to help her make the switch from medic to master fitness trainer in the National Guard. But at the heart of it, she wants to use her training to help children. "I took it because I just love fitness, and because I wanted to go pro bono and help people," she says. "A perfect world for me would be to work with lower-income families and find healthier ways for them to get out with their kids, to be a role model, to lead by action."

That sounds exactly like the model citizen Dailey has in mind. 🌿

Ken Olsen is a frequent contributor to The American Legion Magazine.

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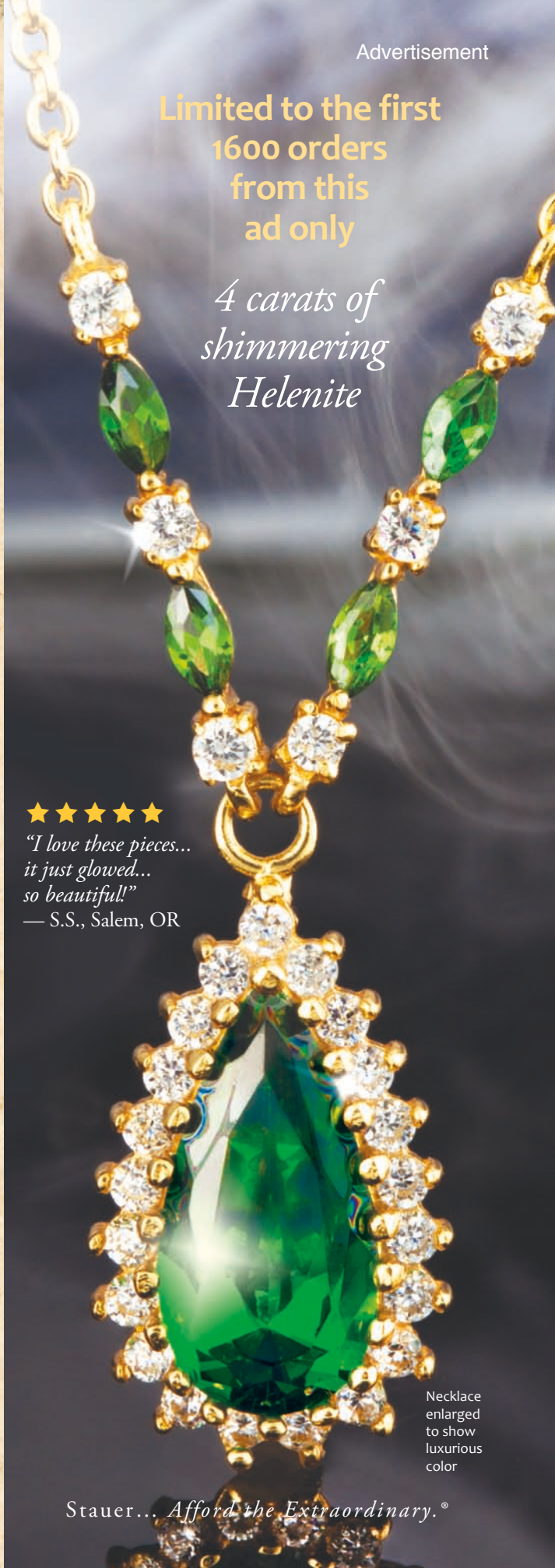
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MYSTERIES OF THE MIND

PART 3

The Truth About TBI

A rehab physician shatters the myths surrounding brain injury.

BY CHRISANNE GORDON

As a rehabilitation physician, I treated many patients with brain injuries. But it wasn't until I experienced the effects of TBI firsthand that I really understood this life-altering injury that affects more than 4 million patients each year in the United States, including over 20 percent of U.S. military personnel.

We are, in fact, experiencing a global TBI epidemic. March is TBI Awareness Month, a time to tackle TBI and raise awareness about these injuries that forever change how people think and process information. In my book "Turn the Lights On!: A Physician's Personal Journey from the Darkness of Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) to Hope, Healing and Recovery," I share the story of my recovery from TBI – a process I did not learn by

reading medical texts but developed in a survival challenge to return to my old self, to regain my brain. This yearlong process is recounted so readers might understand that recovery is difficult but quite possible.

The first step to recovery is discovering the truth about mild TBI. Unfortunately, there are many myths surrounding this injury, which we are just now defining and treating. If you or anyone you know is struggling from the signature wound of war, TBI or a sports "concussion," share this information. It may be the difference between light and dark, hope and despair, life and death.

Myth No. 1: You need to be knocked out to have a brain injury. Even mild injuries such as a soccer header or hitting your head on the car-door

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frame can result in TBI. Often there is a dazed feeling that lasts for only a few seconds, but you do not have to be knocked out to suffer a TBI. The more severe the injury, the greater the risk of blacking out. As a rule, the longer you are unconscious, the more likely that injury is severe.

Myth No. 2: If you are dazed or only mildly knocked out, you can return to normal activities immediately.

Multiple studies reveal that resting the brain is imperative to healing. That includes limiting stimuli from light, noise, and physical and mental activity. For example, high school athletes who suffer concussions may not return to school immediately due to difficulties they experience while studying.

Myth No. 3: A small concussion without noticeable effects is nothing to worry about.

Every head injury should be evaluated, treated and followed, based on the diagnosis. The No. 1 predictor for a head injury is having had a previous head injury, even a mild one. In fact, “second impact syndrome” – when the second concussion occurs soon after the first (hours, days or weeks) – can lead to a more severe injury or death.

Myth No. 4: Everyone with a brain injury who fears or avoids crowds has post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Avoiding crowds, light or loud noises is a trait of PTSD but also a hallmark trait of TBI. This results from the injured brain’s ability to filter information and stimuli. If a TBI sufferer experiences high activity areas, the result is stimulus overload for the brain, which creates an adrenaline release that may lead to panic attacks and further avoidance of these activities.

Myth No. 5: Everyone can self-medicate the effects of TBI with alcohol or drugs. Self-medication, especially with alcohol, is prevalent among TBI patients. The initial use may help reduce the brain overload typically related to the injury, but over the long term can lead to significant social, financial and legal problems. A combination of brain injury and addiction is the leading cause of suicide and homelessness among veterans.

Myth No. 6: You just have a headache; aspirin or acetaminophen will help. The persistent headache resulting from TBI is a warning sign and often related to vascular instability in the brain. Migraine-type headaches are common with TBI and should be treated differently. As an anticoagulant, aspirin can increase bleeding, and use of acetaminophen in high dosages or regularly over a long period can lead to liver problems. Any

pain treatment, even over-the-counter medication, should be prescribed by a physician.

Myth No. 7: You cannot concentrate or remember things after your injury. You must be going crazy. You are out of your mind.

Difficulty remembering and concentrating are functions of the brain that may be affected by TBI. Recent advances in neuroradiology, such as diffusion tensor or functional MRIs, can show us areas of the brain that are injured or deficient. Even a small area of injury can affect a significant function, such as a lesion in the speech center.

Myth No. 8: Your CT scan or MRI was normal, so you must not have an injury.

Standard imaging techniques such as MRIs and CTs are unable to reveal lesions or damage in a majority of TBI cases. Newer techniques such as diffusion tensor MRIs, SPECT and PET scans can better determine the extent of injury. Neuropsychological testing, similar to tests done with athletes, also help determine functional difficulties and identify the location of the brain injury.

Myth No. 9: Months later, you still feel out of sorts, so you won’t ever get better.

The brain can continue to recover for up to two years or longer after an injury. Brain retraining, through speech therapy and mind strategies such as computer games or other applications, can assist in healing by prompting the brain to lay down new pathways to perform the functions lost through injury.

Myth No. 10: You cannot wait to be fully recovered and your old self again. Even mild TBI can lead to a shift in brain function and personality. Loss of consciousness or decreased consciousness is often followed by a period of heightened awareness or hyperactivity, especially if you were injured at a time when you were adrenaline-charged. While healing and recovery are possible, diagnosis comes first. This requires increased awareness of what TBI looks like to health-care providers, first responders, employers, family, friends and community leaders. From pro football players to veterans returning home, it is our job to support those suffering from this injury. 🌿

“Turn the Lights On!: A Physician’s Personal Journey from the Darkness of Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) to Hope, Healing, and Recovery” is available exclusively from [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com). For more about Chrisanne Gordon and her work with TBI, visit chrisannegordonmd.com or her nonprofit veterans foundation, resurrectinglives.org.



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A THREAT UNMET

Our military continues to encounter unidentified aerial phenomena, but the government appears neither curious nor courageous enough to investigate.

Getty

BY CHRISTOPHER MELLON

On Dec. 16, 2017, *The New York Times* ran a front-page story revealing the existence of a congressionally mandated program to study unidentified flying objects (UFOs). The article was accompanied by two recently declassified DoD videos obtained by F-18 fighter pilots. On both occasions, the UFOs were seen in broad daylight by numerous Navy personnel, the reports were independently corroborated by sophisticated military sensor systems, and the unidentified aircraft demonstrated revolutionary aeronautical capabilities. For example, some of the craft were observed descending from altitudes above 80,000 feet, then hovering as low as 50 feet above the ocean before accelerating to hypersonic speeds from a dead stop.

As more information emerged, including the release of another official DoD UFO video, a handful of senators and representatives on the national security oversight committees sought briefings. At this point, the Navy and DoD could no longer conceal the truth.

Joseph Gradisher, spokesman for the deputy chief of naval operations, admitted that the vehicles in the declassified Navy videos are neither a hoax nor secret U.S. test aircraft: “The Navy designates the objects contained in these videos as unidentified aerial phenomena,” or UAP. In other words, they might be Russian, Chinese or even alien spacecraft. Whatever they are, they are real, they aren’t ours, and they continue to violate U.S. airspace with impunity.

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With that short statement, the Navy upended the conclusions of every prior U.S. government examination of the UFO phenomenon, from Project Sign in 1948 to Project Blue Book, which was terminated in 1969. Written when the Cold War was in full swing, these reports were designed to debunk UFO sightings and discredit civilian UFO researchers in order to reassure, rather than inform, the public. It is hardly surprising, then, that despite hundreds of cases defying explanation the Air Force concluded there was “no evidence of developments or principles beyond the range of modern scientific knowledge” and that no case “reported, investigated and evaluated by the Air Force has ever given any indication of threat to our national security.”

The only scientist assigned full time to Project Blue Book, astronomer Allen Hynek, expressed his contempt for these findings, calling the project’s statistical methods “nothing less than a travesty” and the attitude and approach within Blue Book “illogical and unscientific.” It is now obvious that the stigma the Air Force sought to create worked only too well, causing most U.S. military and intelligence personnel to conceal rather than report UFO/UAPs – a process of self-blinding that resulted in decades of lost data.

The evidence provided by DoD videos and radar is vital for intelligence analysis, yet there is nothing more compelling than meeting the Navy pilots and hearing their stories firsthand. In my conversations with Cmdr. David Fravor, his excitement was palpable and contagious, as were the fears of his anonymous female wingman when she described the surreal manner in which the UAP seemed to defy the laws of physics, tumbling through nonsensical angles to maintain a dominant position vis-à-vis Fravor’s F-18.

Internet talking heads like to cast doubt on these accounts, proposing spurious theories of ghost aircraft lacking transponders lurking in restricted DoD airspace. Clearly they have not interviewed the pilots and radar operators who encountered these objects at close range. Had they done so, they would find no ambiguity, doubt or confusion. Fravor’s wingman told me, and Fravor agreed, “We didn’t stand a chance against it.” I cannot imagine Navy F-18 pilots saying that about any Russian or Chinese fighter. These sobering words from badass Navy combat pilots should be taken to heart by DoD officials and Congress.

Indeed, the radical and technologically superior nature of these craft is a common theme for Navy pilots on both coasts. In the famous “Gimbal”

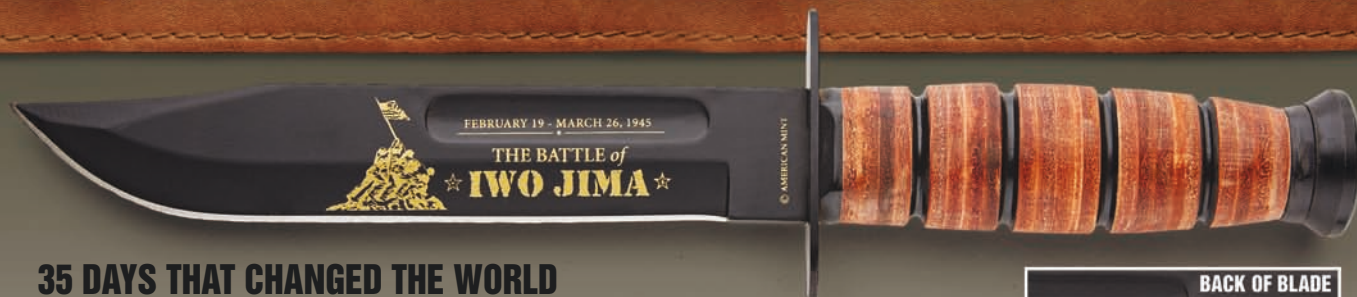
video posted by *The New York Times*, one of the pilots is heard to exclaim, “There’s a whole fleet of them out there!” He was referring to a V-shaped formation of smaller craft approaching the fighters as they observed a larger “mothership” in the video. At close range, these bizarre craft appear to be black cubes, the corners of which are touching the inside of transparent spheres a mere six feet in diameter. There are no discernable air inlets, exhaust, wings, or means of lift or propulsion, yet they have been tracked at supersonic speeds and seem able to remain aloft indefinitely. They could hardly be more strange and alien in appearance or behavior. Yet an obdurate DoD bureaucracy is making almost no effort to determine the origin of these craft or their means of propulsion.

If we knew for certain that the Russian or Chinese militaries had leapfrogged the United States technologically, there would be an uproar, much as there was when the Soviet Union launched Sputnik, the world’s first man-made satellite. Fearful of falling behind, the public grew restive and Congress promptly responded by increasing spending for NASA and bolstering science-education programs. These initiatives paid handsome dividends 11 years later when Neil Armstrong set foot on the moon, arriving courtesy not only of a new space vehicle but thousands of patented new technologies that strengthened U.S. industry and leadership in science and technology.

Although it seems a major new technology gap has been identified, there is no discernible effort underway to verify the gap, much less close it. True, the Navy states that it is “updating and formalizing the process by which reports of any suspected incursions can be made to the cognizant authorities,” but little else has changed. No major investigations have been launched. There is no indication the DoD or intelligence community leadership is engaged. And there is still no process for collecting and integrating pertinent information about UFO/UAPs from the myriad agencies and departments that possess it (NASA, the National Reconnaissance Office, the FBI, the National Security Agency, the CIA, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the Department of Homeland Security, the armed forces and others).

This paralysis is occurring at a time when the scientific community increasingly recognizes the possibility of humanity encountering probes from spacefaring civilizations. In fact, last year the House Committee on Space, Science and Technology directed NASA to begin looking for “technosignatures,” by which it means alien

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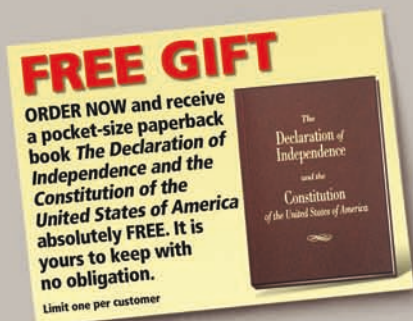
On February 19, 1945, U.S. Marines hit the shores of Iwo Jima after 3 days of pre-invasion bombing. Their objective was a dormant volcano named Mt. Suribachi, which rose 546 feet above the shore. Control of Suribachi meant control of the island.

The climb up Suribachi was fought inch by inch. The Japanese fought from a fortified network of underground bunkers which made gunfire ineffective. The high ground had to be taken using flame throwers and grenades. Finally, on February 23, U.S. forces reached the summit. The raising of the American flag that day provided a lasting impression, inspiring not only the combatants, but also a war-weary nation.

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space probes. This is happening because many exobiologists now recognize probes are more efficient and effective than radio waves for purposes of space exploration or contact. As unlikely as it may seem, there is no denying the possibility that some UFO/UAPs encountered by our military are probes launched by distant civilizations.

While military personnel such as Fravor and Lt. Ryan Graves – an F-18 pilot who said UFOs followed his Navy strike group for months – are awed by the technology they observed, they are undeterred, eager to give chase both literally and figuratively. Reflecting on his encounter, Fravor told me, “I want to fly that thing!” He naturally expects his country to figure out where these things come from, why they are here and how they work. Fravor and his colleagues at least still have the right stuff, even if the hierarchy above them is lethargic and risk-averse.

If nothing else, the U.S. government could at least examine the data already collected by our highly capable spy systems during periods of significant UFO/UAP activity. For example, since we know multiple UAPs were operating in close proximity to the *Nimitz* Strike Group during the week of Nov. 14, 2004, analysts could review archived data collected by the Space-Based Infrared System (SBIRS), the global infrasound network of the International Monitoring System and various space-based electronic sensors. Limiting such reviews to narrow periods of time and location would keep the workload modest and manageable. Reviews of this kind for incidents occurring off the East Coast since 2015 should also be conducted. Direction from Congress or a senior administration official is all it would take to initiate the process.

Though Navy pilots have sounded the alarm – their testimony has appeared in print, online and on national television – there is still no sign that our massive DoD and intelligence bureaucracies, or our Congress, are seeking answers to the UFO/UAP mystery on behalf of military personnel who are potentially at risk from midair collisions if nothing else (one near miss by a Navy fighter has already been reported).

At the strategic level, isn't it odd that illegal immigration is an emergency requiring DoD to forgo billions in spending yet no funds are available to investigate hypersonic platforms capable of carrying weapons of mass destruction across U.S. borders? Is there any way to overcome this dilemma?

Perhaps. With little effort or expense, the Trump administration could request a National Intelligence Estimate on “anomalous aerospace threats” or something with a similarly appropriate and sober title. Alternatively, Congress could simply direct the defense secretary or director of national intelligence to prepare a threat assessment. These are modest, inexpensive proposals for assessing the serious concerns expressed by military personnel.

Another way to accommodate the political sensitivities of officials repelled by the UFO stigma would be to form an independent panel under the auspices of the National Science Foundation (NSF). There is no shortage of cleared scientists in industry and academia who could serve on such a body. The administration could undertake this initiative on its own, or Congress could pass a measure to establish and fund it.

Pearl Harbor and 9/11 are tragic examples of intelligence failures that could have been avoided. Our continuing inability to identify the radical aerospace vehicles violating our airspace is an ongoing intelligence failure, one that arguably requires written notification to the House and Senate intelligence committees pursuant to Section 502 of the National Security Act of 1947.

While Congress has not received a formal notification regarding this failure, and perhaps never will, it is certainly aware that DoD is unable to identify these aircraft or prevent them from violating U.S. airspace. The question now is whether our leaders will remain passive out of concern for outdated stigmas or act on behalf of our servicemembers and our nation.

If we fail to thoroughly investigate, in the wake of reliable pilot reporting and the Navy's admission, it can only be because policymakers are prioritizing political expediency over national security – a state of affairs reminiscent of the declining Roman Empire, when the needs and concerns of troops in the field were given short shrift by maneuvering politicians in Rome. Hopefully, support for our troops is one thing that still unites us. 🌿

Christopher Mellon served as deputy assistant secretary of defense for intelligence in the Bill Clinton and George W. Bush administrations. He is an adviser to the To the Stars Academy for Arts and Science, a privately owned media and scientific research company. He also serves as a contributor to HISTORY's popular nonfiction series “Unidentified: Inside America's UFO Investigation.”

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Ralph Snake, chaplain of Andrew Blackhawk American Legion Post 129 in Black River Falls, Wis., salutes each panel of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Tribute Wall during the opening ceremony of the Celebration of Freedom at the Columbia County Fairgrounds in Portage, Wis., on Sept. 5, 2019. Photo by Jeff Stoffer

WELCOME HOME

The month of March is an opportunity to personally thank and honor Vietnam War veterans and their families.

BY JAMES T. JACKSON

The Vietnam War Commemoration is grateful to the American Legion posts and Auxiliary units across the nation that are commemorative partners with us, and continue to thank and honor our Vietnam War veterans and their families who so richly deserve recognition for their service and sacrifice during the war. Most were not thanked when they returned from that conflict. American Legion posts are doing the right thing by thanking them and welcoming them home.

On Sept. 28, 2019, American Legion Post 17 in Naugatuck, Conn., celebrated the centennial of



The American Legion and Post 17 in an event honoring veterans of all eras, including Vietnam. To date, 375 American Legion posts have hosted 783 Vietnam War Commemorative Partner events like these, reaching 82,918 Vietnam War veterans and their families. A huge thank you to Post 17 and others for helping connect us with and thank Vietnam veterans.

Americans have been uniting to thank and honor veterans who served during the Vietnam era – and their families – for years. But we have many more to find and recognize. Spearheading this effort is the United States of America Vietnam



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War Commemoration, which was authorized by Congress under DoD auspices and launched at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in 2012. Our goal is to thank and honor America's 6.4 million living veterans of the 9 million who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces from Nov. 1, 1955, to May 15, 1975 – regardless of location – and the families of all who served. The commemoration is supported by American Legion resolutions.

The Department of Veterans Affairs estimates that we are losing more than 500 of these veterans every day. We must act now to do what should have been done 50 years ago. We must personally thank each of these Vietnam veterans and their families for their service to the nation, and we need Legionnaires' help to engage communities so they can be recognized in the places where they live and work.

NATIONAL VIETNAM WAR VETERANS DAY Two years ago, President Trump signed into law the Vietnam War Veterans Recognition Act of 2017, establishing a National Vietnam War Veterans Day that will be observed every March 29 in perpetuity.

The commemoration committee is coordinating with governors of all U.S. states, commonwealths and territories, as well as the mayor of the District of Columbia, to conduct events on or around this day. All have already hosted events of some type for Vietnam War veterans and their families.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. – known as “The Wall” – will again, and always, have a significant role in our nation's honoring of Vietnam War veterans on March 29. The Wall is an arresting reminder to more than 5 million annual visitors of the service and sacrifice of more than 58,000 Americans. There is something haunting, cleansing and healing about this hallowed site, and we encourage every American to experience it.

COMMEMORATIVE PARTNER PROGRAM Our Commemorative Partner Program is an organizationally based, hometown-centric initiative established to reach Vietnam War veterans and their families in their communities. Nearly 12,000 partners have committed to conducting local events or activities annually for three years to recognize, thank and honor our veterans and their families. They are a mix of local and national businesses, corporations, veteran and military organizations, associations, educational institutions, community groups, towns, cities and states. To date, they have conducted more than 17,000 events honoring

approximately 2.5 million Vietnam-era veterans, and more than 41,000 families have received special recognition in memory of their veterans (the Certificate of Honor program online at vietnamwar50th.com). We heartily thank them for their continued efforts to recognize more veterans and families. We are now seeking assistance to find those Vietnam-era veterans who are unable to attend events. Many are in care facilities, nursing homes, hospitals, or in their homes and unable to travel.

VIETNAM VETERAN LAPEL PIN

The commemoration provides Vietnam Veteran lapel pins to our commemorative partners for dignified public presentations during commemorative events, for living veterans who served on active duty during the specified timeframe, regardless of location of service. Each veteran who served during the dates is eligible to receive one lapel pin, as a tangible sign of our nation's gratitude. Inscribed on the back are the words “A Grateful Nation Thanks and Honors You.”

Veterans and their families can search for upcoming commemorative events in or near their hometowns at vietnamwar50th.com/events. Zoom in to locate your state and city or town, and click on a blue pin for details of an upcoming event, including contact information. There is a “Contact Us” button at the top of the page for veterans who need help finding an event. If there are no events in your area, check back frequently, as new events are added weekly. 🇺🇸

James T. Jackson is a retired Army major general and director of the United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration.



The United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration website has photo and video galleries, an oral history and timeline of the war, fact sheets, posters, a media and public information kit, a database of commemorative events and supporting materials, an FAQ, educator resources and more.

Visitors can download applications to become a commemorative partner, request a Certificate of Honor and lapel pin, and donate online.

 vietnamwar50th.com

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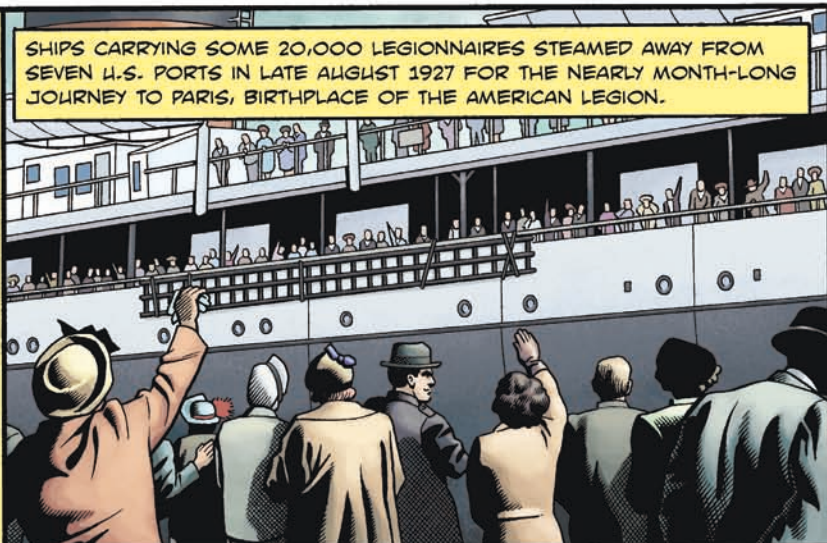
LORE OF THE LEGION

STORY: JEFF STOFFER
ART: GARY MARTIN
COLOR: MARCUS ESKOW

THEY CALLED IT
THE "SECOND AEF."

AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCES VETERANS OF THE GREAT WAR INVADED EUROPE ONCE AGAIN, WHERE THEY HAD FOUGHT A DECADE EARLIER. THEY WOULD VISIT FORMER BATTLEFIELDS, HONOR THEIR FALLEN COMRADES, HAVE CEREMONIES AND MARCH BEFORE HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS.

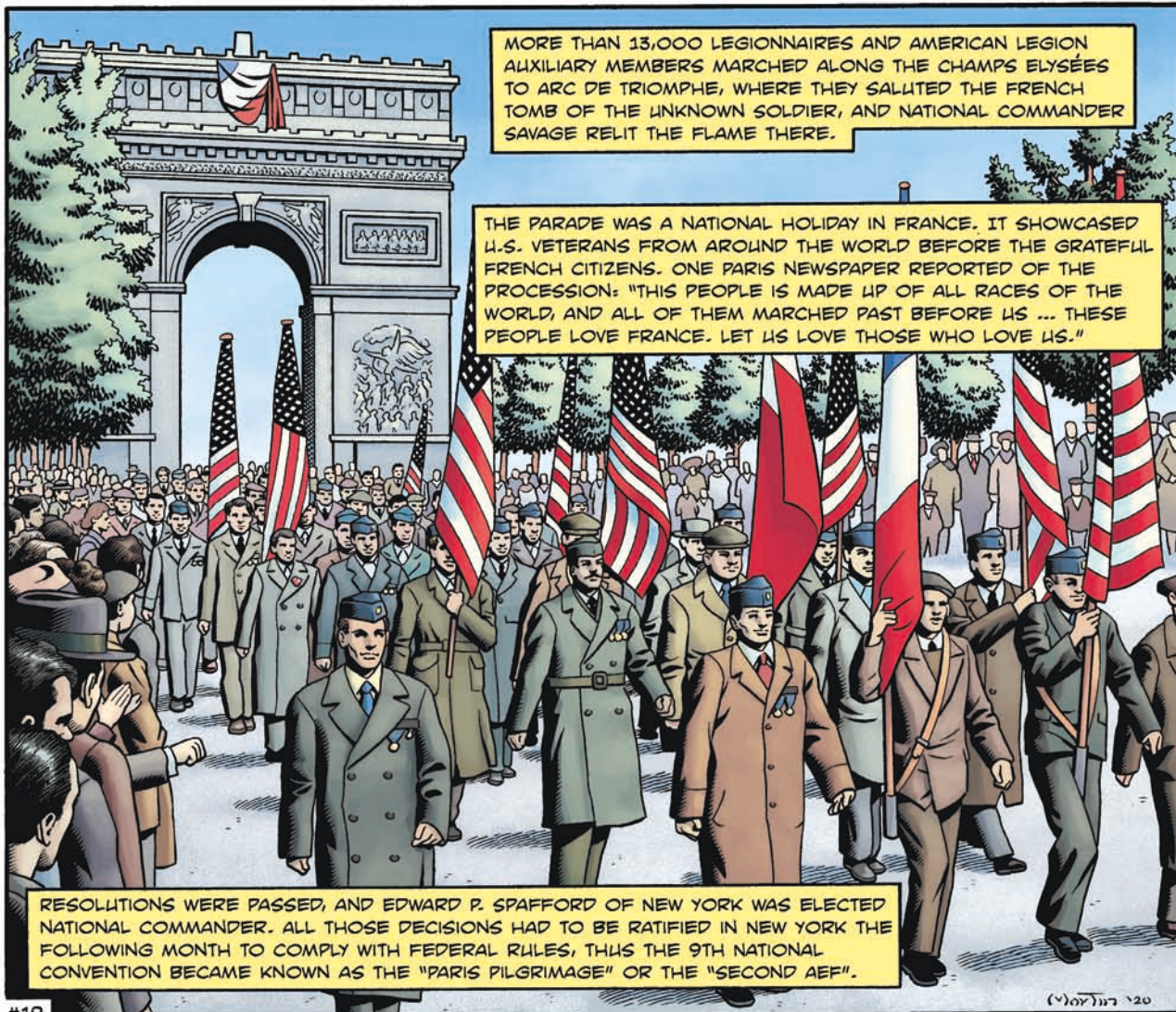
SHIPS CARRYING SOME 20,000 LEGIONNAIRES STEAMED AWAY FROM SEVEN U.S. PORTS IN LATE AUGUST 1927 FOR THE NEARLY MONTH-LONG JOURNEY TO PARIS, BIRTHPLACE OF THE AMERICAN LEGION.



THE LEGIONNAIRES WOULD CONDUCT THE 9TH NATIONAL CONVENTION SEPT. 19-23, AT THE FAMED TROCADERO PALACE. FRENCH PRESIDENT GASTON DOUMERGUE, AEF COMMANDING GEN. JOHN PERSHING, AND MARSHAL FERDINAND FOCH, ALLIED COMMANDER DURING THE WAR, TOOK THEIR PLACES ALONGSIDE NATIONAL COMMANDER HOWARD P. SAVAGE FOR CEREMONIES.

MORE THAN 13,000 LEGIONNAIRES AND AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY MEMBERS MARCHED ALONG THE CHAMPS ELYSÉES TO ARC DE TRIOMPHE, WHERE THEY SALUTED THE FRENCH TOMB OF THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER, AND NATIONAL COMMANDER SAVAGE RELIT THE FLAME THERE.

THE PARADE WAS A NATIONAL HOLIDAY IN FRANCE. IT SHOWCASED U.S. VETERANS FROM AROUND THE WORLD BEFORE THE GRATEFUL FRENCH CITIZENS. ONE PARIS NEWSPAPER REPORTED OF THE PROCESSION: "THIS PEOPLE IS MADE UP OF ALL RACES OF THE WORLD, AND ALL OF THEM MARCHED PAST BEFORE US ... THESE PEOPLE LOVE FRANCE. LET US LOVE THOSE WHO LOVE US."



RESOLUTIONS WERE PASSED, AND EDWARD P. SPAFFORD OF NEW YORK WAS ELECTED NATIONAL COMMANDER. ALL THOSE DECISIONS HAD TO BE RATIFIED IN NEW YORK THE FOLLOWING MONTH TO COMPLY WITH FEDERAL RULES, THUS THE 9TH NATIONAL CONVENTION BECAME KNOWN AS THE "PARIS PILGRIMAGE" OR THE "SECOND AEF".

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- Gilmore B.



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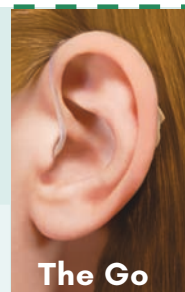
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Sgt. Danielle Farber of the Pennsylvania National Guard, left, and Staff Sgt. Jessica Smiley of the South Carolina National Guard were the first National Guard enlisted females to complete Army Ranger leadership school at Fort Benning, Ga., last December. Photo by Sgt. Brian Calhoun, South Carolina National Guard

HONOR & REMEMBRANCE

A piece of American Legion history

The November 2019 “Lore of the American Legion” page tells the story of SS *American Legion*, launched in 1919 and turned over to the War Department in 1939. From there, it became USAT *American Legion*, and later USS *American Legion* (AP 35/APA 17).

That bit of history was fresh in the mind of Domenick Scarlato, a member of Joseph Loeffler American Legion Post 1006 in Brentwood, N.Y., last winter when he spotted an *American Legion* (APA 17) patch at one of the military memorabilia shows he frequents. He estimates the patch is about 77 years old.

“Oh my God! The American Legion!” Scarlato exclaimed when he saw the patch. A 34-year member, he served as a post and county commander, and knew the ship’s history. Like *American Legion*, he served in the Navy during World War II, but in underwater demolition training and then on a destroyer. The seller didn’t know much about the patch’s provenance, but Scarlato says it is in good condition.

— Laura Edwards



Photo courtesy Domenick Scarlato

A SALUTE TO WOMEN IN THE MILITARY

"I've had the honor to serve with many of the 250,000 women who have deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan on battlefields where there are no clear lines, battlefields where every man and woman had to be a rifleman first. And today, women are in combat. That is just a reality. Thousands of women have been decorated for valor and 146 have given their lives. Today, what was once a band of brothers has truly become a band of brothers and sisters."

Gen. Ann Dunwoody, the first woman to serve as a four-star general in the Army and the U.S. military, at her retirement ceremony in 2012



Since the establishment of the Army Nurse Corps in 1901, American women have served overseas, under fire and on the front lines in every major U.S. conflict.

500,000+

Women who served during the Vietnam era, the Korean War and World War II

1.65 million

Women veterans in the United States and Puerto Rico in 2018

35.8

Percent of living women veterans who served post-9/11

2.2 million

Number of women veterans projected for 2045

20

Percent of military recruits who are women

15

Percent of active-duty force who are women

18

Percent of reserves and National Guard who are women



Did you know?

Congress established a regular women's component in all branches of U.S. military in 1948 but capped women's participation at 2 percent of the total force. The cap was lifted incrementally starting in 1973, as part of the creation of an all-volunteer force.

Sources: "Five Myths About Female Veterans," Jerri Bell, *The Washington Post*; U.S. Census Bureau, Statista

AMATEUR RADIO

Join an American Legion ham radio net

The American Legion Amateur Radio Club (TALARC) conducts monthly network operations, or nets, run by officers' and members' net control stations from National Headquarters in Indianapolis and homes across the nation.

Amateur radio nets are conducted for purposes formal and informal, ranging from facilitating emergency operations in disaster situations to discussing specific items of interest to a variety of operators. TALARC monthly nets are a regular gathering of American Legion Family hams for conversation and information-sharing over the airwaves. With more than 4,100 TALARC members across the country, the

nets are an opportunity to learn what other members are doing in different parts of the country and world.

A schedule of regular TALARC events is posted online at legion.org/hamradio/monthly-net-schedule. Current formats include both traditional radio bandwidths and digital ones via the internet.

An FCC license is required to access most nets, but the TALARC page on the national website (legion.org/hamradio) has links to help interested American Legion Family members take the first steps to getting a license – and then, hopefully, joining the club.

– Marty Justis, TALARC president





Family members unveil a plaque commemorating the future aircraft carrier USS Doris Miller during a Martin Luther King Jr. Day celebration event at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam. U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Justin R. Pacheco

ACTIVE DUTY

New carrier to honor Pearl Harbor hero



Doris Miller U.S. Navy

The Navy has announced that the next aircraft carrier in line for production, CVN 81, will be named *Doris Miller*, in honor of World War II hero Doris “Dorie” Miller. It will be the first aircraft carrier named for an African American and an enlisted sailor, according to the Navy.

During the attack on Pearl Harbor, Miller was on duty on board USS *West Virginia*. He was below decks when the first torpedo hit the ship but was then, as the Navy recounts, “ordered to the bridge, where he helped

carry the ship’s mortally wounded captain to safety. Miller then loaded and fired an anti-aircraft machine gun – a weapon that, as an African American in a segregated military, he had not been trained to operate.”

Even after the order to abandon ship was announced, Miller stayed behind “to help evacuate shipmates and save the lives of sailors in the burning water,” the Navy adds.

For his bravery and heroism, Miller became the first African American to be awarded the Navy Cross. The decoration was pinned on Miller by Adm. Chester Nimitz, who noted, “This marks the first time in this conflict that such high tribute has been made in the Pacific Fleet to a member of his race, and I’m sure that the future will see others similarly honored for brave acts.”

Tragically, Miller was killed nearly two years after Pearl Harbor, when *Liscome Bay* was sunk in battle, off the Gilbert Islands.

“Dorie Miller stood for everything that is good about our nation,” Acting Secretary of the Navy Thomas Modly said. “His story deserves to be remembered and repeated wherever our people continue to stand the watch today.”

This will be the second warship named after Miller. The Navy commissioned USS *Miller*, a destroyer escort, in June 1973. CVN 81 will be a *Ford*-class supercarrier, manned by a crew of 4,359 sailors and armed with more than 75 warplanes.

TECHNOLOGY

Digital dangers

63 Percent of Americans who say they have been victimized by digital scams

56 Percent of Americans who say they have been victimized by online fraud

54 Percent of Americans who say their social media account has been hacked

49 Percent of Americans who say they have been the victim of a data breach

Sources: Studyfinds.org, Moneygram.com

HISTORY

The costliest U.S. wars

WORLD WAR II

405,399 U.S. military deaths

\$4.69 trillion (2019 dollars)



U.S. Army

IRAQ WAR

4,410 U.S. military deaths

\$1.01 trillion (2019 dollars)



U.S. Army

AFGHANISTAN WAR

2,285 U.S. military deaths

\$910.47 billion (2019 dollars)



U.S. Army

VIETNAM WAR

58,220 U.S. military deaths

\$843.63 billion (2019 dollars)

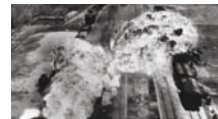


U.S. Marine Corps

KOREAN WAR

36,574 U.S. military deaths

\$389.81 billion (2019 dollars)



U.S. Army

Sources: Congressional Research Service, USA TODAY

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Japan's big defense move

Japan’s government has announced that it is buying Mageshima Island from a private seller, with plans to develop the island into a base for Japanese and U.S. warplanes, CNN reports.

The uninhabited island, which sits 21 miles from Japan’s southernmost main island of Kyushu, will enable Japanese jets as well as Navy and Marine Corps jets to challenge China’s encroachment into the East China Sea.



Dennis saw an 18% increase in his FEV1 results after cellular therapy. Contact Lung Health Institute to find out which treatment plan is right for you.*

Dennis C. is an actual Lung Health Institute patient.^

In nearly 10 years of service in the U.S. Air Force, Dennis had seen his share of challenges. During his service, he was exposed to soldering fumes, dust from the desert and secondhand smoke in offices.

When he retired, he looked back on his time with a sense of accomplishment and pride. Unfortunately, like many vets, he did

ONE VET'S STORY OF CHRONIC LUNG DISEASE

not have access to a respirator to protect his lungs during his service.

A Search for Answers

Not long after he served, he noticed he had symptoms similar to a common cold. When he had difficulty breathing, he started looking for answers. At a doctor's appointment, he was told by a physician assistant that he might have a touch of emphysema even though he didn't smoke. The doctor said Dennis was too young for emphysema. Dennis was only 29 years old.

Eventually, Dennis was diagnosed with COPD and emphysema. The VA gave Dennis inhalers, nebulizers, a CPAP machine and oxygen, in hopes to reduce his symptoms. However, these treatments didn't address the root cause of his illness.

As the years went on, Dennis tried his best to stay active. He used to be able to get 10,000 steps in, but he noticed it was getting harder and harder to stay active. Shortness of breath took its toll on Dennis' active life. He was left with aches and pains from the stress of trying to breathe. Even taking the stairs wore him out.

Looking Beyond Traditional Treatments

Dennis was left looking for something beyond the medications. That's when he found Lung Health Institute and their

treatment options for cellular therapy.

Before treatment, Dennis was ordered a pulmonary function test and made it less than 20 steps before he had to stop. Not long after receiving cellular therapy, Dennis repeated the test and was able to walk for more than 3 minutes before he needed oxygen.

Life today is different for Dennis. The constant coughing that was a fact of life for him before is mostly gone now, and he works out regularly in the gym and has increased the weight he lifts.

Find Hope for Chronic Lung Conditions

Lung Health Institute focuses exclusively on treating chronic inflammatory lung disease and has provided more than 8,000 treatments. Our cellular therapy uses isolated cells from a patient's own blood to help reduce inflammation. While chronic lung conditions don't have a cure, 86.6% of our COPD patients report positive outcomes sustained at 1 year after treatment.* There is hope for a better quality of life.



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Lung Health Institute uses cellular therapy to treat people with chronic lung diseases such as:

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As a small expression of our gratitude, Lung Health Institute offers a discount on our cellular therapy to veterans and active duty military members.

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* For more information, go to theLungHealthInstitute.com/Results.

^ Each patient is different. Results may vary.

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Student veterans from across the country visited the American Legion table at the Student Veterans of America National Conference in Los Angeles. Photo by Holly K. Soria

EDUCATION

Student veterans share their stories of Legion support

More than 2,500 veterans from across the country made their way to Los Angeles Jan. 3-5 for the 12th Student Veterans of America National Conference. More than 2,500 are estimated to have participated, another record attendance year for the association's marquee event.

When they were not taking in one of the 96 breakout sessions, networking or listening to motivational guest speakers, many attendees dropped by an American Legion video booth across from the Department of California's information table, and 28 recorded their stories of how the nation's largest veterans organization has helped them.

"I knew I wanted to get involved in the veteran community somehow," said Ohio State University student Nate Garens, who served in the U.S. Marine Corps between 2005 and 2017. "So I was

looking at all the veterans organizations ... and the Legion was first, and in my opinion the Legion is best. That's why I joined."

Graduate student Ashley Gorbujal-Maldonado, who at 26 has been a member of The American Legion since 2014, said the camaraderie of membership and the satisfaction of community service are key reasons she is a member. "It's like having a family," the former Ohio Army National Guard soldier said. "The military provided that for me. (And) to have the opportunity to help others and be an influence in my community is really what drew me to The American Legion."

Syracuse University law student Ryan Marquette, who said he plans to be a Legionnaire for life, added that post-9/11 veterans are drawn to the organization's advocacy. "They are socially aware, they do believe in

having social impact, and that's what The American Legion does, through different fundraisers in their local communities or through lobbying on Capitol Hill for veterans issues. I think that is going to attract a lot of GWOT-era veterans as time continues."

Florida Legionnaire Nestor Palma of Broward College, who served 20 years as a Navy corpsman, said he was drawn to The American Legion's tradition of service. "I am a big fan and believer in keeping tradition," he said. "I want to continue helping veterans any way I can. This will be a forever-going passion for me, taking care of veterans with the Legion, with education and community. It's a passion that will stick for life. I will be a Legionnaire for life."

To see video testimonials and an extended story on the SVA National Conference, visit legion.org/education.

— Jeff Stoffer

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Urinary incontinence affects more than 5 million men in the United States of all ages. Diapers trap moisture, causing UTIs, discomfort and odors.

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“I can keep doing what I want to do, without having to worry about running to the bathroom or changing my clothes. It's a Godsend.”

— John in Michigan

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SOCIAL MEDIA

#hypocrisy

Although the People's Republic of China (PRC) bars its subjects from using Twitter, PRC foreign ministry officials are themselves using it "to tout or defend" Beijing's policies around the world, as AFP reports.

The PRC's tweets range from silly to sarcastic to strange. "One diplomat posts artistic selfies in Nepal ... China's envoy in South Africa quotes Western poetry alongside pictures of sunsets and wildlife ... ambassador to Britain Liu Xiaoming has used the site to issue strident defenses of beleaguered Chinese telco giant Huawei."

Other PRC tweets overuse the abbreviation "LOL" and use hashtags "to extol Beijing's worldview or lambaste critics," AFP adds.

Beijing's use of Twitter is triggering unexpected consequences and responses. "Replies to the foreign ministry's tweets are rife with scorn and derision, often accompanied by news reports documenting China's repressive policies and satirical cartoons critical of Beijing," according to AFP.

Wenfang Tang, a professor at Hong Kong University, suggests that Beijing's use of Twitter may be a function of President Trump's use of the platform. Beijing sees "how popular Trump is on social media, and how often Western media quote his tweets ... So in that sense it's the Trump effect."



VERBATIM

There will be some withdrawal symptoms. We might have to take some tranquilizers.

Sen. Ben Cardin, D-Md., joking about the ban on cellphones and talking during the Senate impeachment trial

Source: Star Tribune

SOCIETY

A 'non-human person'

A female orangutan granted legal personhood by a judge in Argentina is now "settling into her new surroundings at the Center for Great Apes in central Florida," NBC News reports.

The 33-year-old orangutan named Sandra is described as "very sweet and inquisitive" by Patti Ragan, director of the center. The primate was born in Germany before spending 25 years at the Buenos Aires Zoo. It was there that Judge Elena Liberatori issued a landmark ruling declaring Sandra not an animal, but rather "a non-human person."

As such, the Argentine judge said the orangutan is "entitled to some legal rights enjoyed by people and better living conditions," NBC notes.

"With that ruling I wanted to tell society something new, that animals are sentient beings and that the first right they have is our obligation to respect them," Liberatori said.



EDUCATION

Benefits transfer must happen on active duty



Q: My husband retired from the Navy 10 years ago. While he was on active duty we had two children, and after his discharge we had our third. When he was on active duty, he transferred some of the 36 months of his Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits to our older children. Since he is no longer on active duty, how does he transfer the remaining benefits to our third child?

A: DoD offers servicemembers the opportunity to transfer Chapter 33 benefits. After separating from the military, your husband cannot designate Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits to your third child unless he gave the child at least one day of benefits while on active duty. If so, he can modify the transferred benefits through the DoD milConnect portal.

Valerie Heffner is a Marine Corps veteran and member of American Legion Post 27 in Apache Junction, Ariz. askvalerie@legion.org

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Texas Membership and Post Activity Chairman Bret Watson talks to veterans during the Mega Career Fair at Fort Hood in Killeen, Texas, on Jan. 14. Photo by Ben Mikesell

CAREERS

Legion talks transition with troops at Fort Hood

The challenges of transitioning from the military to civilian life – finding a job, getting one's finances in order, accessing earned VA benefits – can be overwhelming for veterans.

During a workshop at Fort Hood on Jan. 13 and the base's Mega Career Fair the next day, national and department staff of The American Legion and the Department of Texas offered support to soldiers planning to separate from the service in the next year.

"We were created to take care of our veterans and make sure they get what they deserve for serving their country," Department of Texas Commander Jeff Perkins said. "That's why we're here."

The transition workshop included sessions on what civilian employers look for in a résumé, how to apply to federal jobs, financial responsibility and the use of LinkedIn for networking.

Service officers Allen Sharp and Ron Peterson spoke about VA benefit claims. Representatives of employers and government agencies, including the Census Bureau and the Texas Workforce Commission, discussed what employers seek in new hires. And Margret Watson of the Texas Veterans Commission explained the process of applying for a federal job. She encouraged servicemembers looking for employment through USAJobs.gov to visit the site every day, as job postings frequently change.

"(Veterans) tend to not ask for help," said Ariel de Jesus, assistant director of the Legion's Veterans Education & Employment Division. "Reach out to us."

Perkins added, "We want to be able to network with them. They need to feel like they can contact us and ask us for assistance on anything they need to be doing."

\$25,000

Amount of an American Legion Operation Comfort Warriors grant to support the 34th annual National Veterans Golden Age Games (NVGAG) in Madison, Wis., June 22-27. NVGAG provides veterans 55 or older who receive VA health care an opportunity to participate in rehabilitative sport and recreation competition.



NATIONAL CONVENTION

Craig Morgan to perform at Commander's Banquet

Country singer and Army veteran Craig Morgan will perform at the National Commander's Banquet on Sept. 1, during The American Legion's 102nd National Convention in Louisville, Ky. Morgan, who served 17 years in the Army and Army Reserve, has made a name



for himself as a singer-songwriter, TV personality and celebrated outdoorsman. He has made 16 overseas trips to perform for troops, and is a recipient of the USO Merit Award (2006) and the Army's Outstanding Civilian Service Medal (2018).

Morgan has charted 25 songs on Billboard, including "Bonfire," "Almost Home," "Redneck Yacht Club," "International Harvester," "This Ole Boy," "Wake Up Loving You" and the four-week No. 1 "That's What I Love About Sunday."

Please contact your department adjutant for ticket availability.

Applications for color guard, band contests available

Bands and color guards can now apply to compete at the 102nd National Convention.

The National Color Guard Contest will be Aug. 28 at the Kentucky International Convention Center. The four classes of competition are Advancing & Retiring, Military, Military-Open and Open. Units can represent any part of the American Legion Family, or have a combination of members. Units must commit to marching in the National Convention Parade on Aug. 30. Applications are due to National Headquarters by July 24.

The National Band Contest will be Aug. 29 at the convention center. The event includes the Concert Band and Exhibition Concert Band classes. Competing bands must also commit to the Sunday parade. Applications are due by May 29.

 legion.org/convention

Photo by Ryan Young



The Invention of the Year

The world's lightest and most portable mobility device

Once in a lifetime, a product comes along that truly moves people. Introducing the future of personal transportation... The Zinger.

Throughout the ages, there have been many important advances in mobility. Canes, walkers, rollators, and scooters were created to help people with mobility issues get around and retain their independence. Lately, however, there haven't been any new improvements to these existing products or developments in this field. Until now. Recently, an innovative design engineer who's developed one of the world's most popular products created a completely new breakthrough... a personal electric vehicle. It's called the **Zinger**, and there is nothing out there quite like it.

"I can now go places and do things that I wasn't able to go or do before. It has given me a new lease on life and I am so happy I found it!"

—Dana S., Texas

The first thing you'll notice about the **Zinger** is its unique look. It doesn't look like a scooter. It's sleek, lightweight yet durable frame is made with aircraft grade aluminum. It weighs only 47.2 lbs but can handle a passenger that's up to 275 lbs! It features one-touch folding and unfolding—when folded it can be wheeled around like a suitcase and fits easily into a backseat or trunk. Then, there are the steering levers. They enable the **Zinger** to move forward, backward, turn on a dime and even pull right up to a table or desk. With its compact yet powerful



Available in Green, Black and Blue (shown)



The Zinger folds to a mere 10 inches.

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RAPID FIRE

HONOR & REMEMBRANCE

Bronze Star awarded to family of WWII POW, Legionnaire



Photo courtesy Edward Ucinski III

Last year, Edward Ucinski III did a military records check on his late grandfather, Edward Sr., a World War II POW and longtime American Legion member. He wanted to pass on his grandfather's legacy of service to his own son, Edward IV.

"When I received the letter, I was in disbelief," said Ucinski, who is commander of Missouri's 10th District and a member of Post 400 in Fenton. It stated that Edward Sr. was eligible for the Bronze Star, thanks to Gen. George C. Marshall making it possible, retroactively, for any soldier who earned a Combat Infantry Badge or Combat Medic Badge to be awarded the Bronze Star without citation.

Twenty-two years after Edward Sr.'s death, a Bronze Star was presented to Edward IV, a Sons of The American Legion Squadron 400 member and the Department of Missouri's 2019 Eagle Scout of the Year, during a Veterans Day ceremony at Rockwood Summit High School.

Edward Sr. served with the 9th Infantry Division, Company K, 39th Infantry Regiment as a BAR gunner. He left behind a pregnant wife and a 1-year-old son, Edward Jr., who would serve in the 6th Infantry during the Vietnam War. After landing on Omaha Beach at Normandy, Edward Sr. fought in the Battle of the Bulge and was captured. He was transported to the Stalag VII-A POW camp in Moosburg, Germany, where he worked until his liberation on Easter Sunday in 1945.

He became commander of American Legion Post 472 in 1951, then transferred to Post 302, where he served as post commander in 1968. "My grandfather believed in the mission of The American Legion," Ucinski said.

Ucinski is in the process of chartering a new Post 302, to be named after his grandfather. He plans for it to house Edward Sr.'s Bronze Star, his World War II uniform and American Legion membership cards.

VERBATIM

People are scared about their future. They don't have a clue about what to expect tomorrow. There is a feeling that all they have is each other.



National Commander Bill Oxford visits the home of Post 87 Commander Clemente Delgado in Guanico, Puerto Rico, on Jan. 15. Photo by Larry Cline

Manuel Martinez, Iraq War Army veteran and member of Monseratte Padilla Post 47 in Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico, whose home was damaged by a series of earthquakes in January. During a visit, National Commander Bill Oxford called on members to donate to the National Emergency Fund, which provides financial assistance to veterans and posts affected by natural disasters. Tax-deductible contributions can be made online at legion.org/nef.



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HONOR & REMEMBRANCE

The world's first Vietnam memorial

On Oct. 27, 1968, a group of U.S. soldiers erected a wooden cross on a hill outside their base camp in the Cha Rang Valley, II Corps area, South Vietnam.

Together, they carried the cross to the top of a 900-foot hill, then dug a hole, put the base of the cross in, and piled rocks around it. Affixed to the vertical beam is a plaque stating that the cross honors U.S. military personnel who fought in Vietnam.

Believing their cross to be the world's first Vietnam veterans memorial, Bill Atkeison of Semmes, Ala., says, "We're proud of it."

Others who helped build the memorial were Larry Trusty, Dayton, Ohio; Eddie Ledden, Largo, Fla.; Wayne Wylie, St. Paul, Minn.; Jim Carwell, Eglin, S.C.; Will Padgett, Goose Creek, S.C.; Chuck Bennett, Alpena, Mich; Gust Teague (deceased), Fairfield, Ohio; Bob Gorse (deceased), Largo, Fla.; Jim Fox (deceased), Little Rock, Ark; and Dave Behrens (deceased); Milwaukee.

Add or view memorials at The American Legion's memorials database:

 legion.org/memorials



Photo via Bill Atkeison

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ACTIVE DUTY

The Navy's carrier gap

"The Navy is finding it increasingly difficult to deploy carriers and keep them on station as the Pentagon says it is working to meet the challenges of two peer competitors, China and Russia," *Breaking Defense* reports. In fact, at one point last fall, all six East Coast-based carriers – *Eisenhower*, *Washington*, *Stennis*, *Truman*, *Bush* and *Ford* – were docked rather than deployed.

To fill gaps created by carriers docked for repairs – and still in production, such as *Ford* and the yet-to-be-completed *Kennedy* – *Breaking Defense* reports that the Navy and Marine Corps "are rapidly warming to the concept of a 'lightning carrier' concept, designed to pack amphibious ships with Marine Corps F-35Bs and sail them to the hotspots to cover places the big decks aren't."

For example, USS *America*, which is technically an amphibious assault ship and not considered an aircraft carrier by the Navy, recently deployed with 13 F-35B Lightning IIs on its deck.

TECHNOLOGY

Poorer children spend more time on screens

"Twins and teens from families that make less than \$35,000 per year spent nearly two hours more with screen media each day than their peers with incomes over \$100,000," Vox reports, citing a study conducted by Common Sense. "That's despite higher-income kids having universally greater ownership of all matter of screens, from smartphones to computers to TVs, according to the study."



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PERSONAL FINANCE



What's keeping you from saving?

FOCUS ON FINANCES



J.J. MONTANARO

Last fall I had the opportunity to attend the America Saves Summit in Washington, D.C., where government, corporate and nonprofit leaders met to discuss the nation's savings crisis.

The Federal Reserve recently reported that 44 percent of Americans say they couldn't come up

with \$400 to fund an unplanned expense. Last year, the Employee Benefit Research Institute's Retirement Confidence Survey indicated that 46 percent of U.S. workers had less than \$25,000 – excluding home equity and pensions – set aside for retirement. The savings rate hit a 10-year high of a paltry 8.3 percent last September.

During the event, the folks at Military Saves released the results from their biennial Military Saves Survey, highlighting the main challenges standing between Americans and savings accounts. As I listened, I was struck by the idea that these challenges are, in fact, reasons to save automatically. As I list the top five challenges on the list, see if you agree.

▪ **Unexpected expenses.** The best way to cope with unexpected expenses is to have some cash set aside in a savings account. What happens when you don't is the second challenge that keeps respondents from saving, which is ...

▪ **Too much debt.** There are plenty of reasons outside your control that you may end up with debt, but if your expenses – unexpected or not – too often outpace your income, you have the power to reverse the trend. And while you're overhauling – cutting back and cutting out as necessary – carve out some space for saving.

▪ **Buying things you don't need.** Cutting back on unnecessary purchases goes a long way toward turning things around for non- or under-savers. The needs vs. wants discussion is one we should be having with our kids, and not in a "do-as-I-say, not-as-I-do" way. I'm not saying ignore the stuff you want and the stuff you want to do; I'm saying save for it as part of your saving plan as opposed to allowing those wants to become a roadblock to saving.

▪ **Not making enough money.** What's enough? In my experience, we all seem to be able to spend whatever money happens to be coming in our front door. That's true whether someone is making \$30,000 or \$300,000. One way to combat this challenge is to put a plan into place to leverage periodic spikes in income (tax returns, inheritances) as well as income increases (pay raises, promotions) and turn those into savings opportunities. Remember, there are two sides to your budget. Working both – income coming in and money going out – is a surefire way to make headway.

▪ **Too many bills.** For these folks, a top-to-bottom assessment of where their money goes is probably a good idea. What changes can you make to provide the wiggle room to start to save?

No matter your goals, whether you're making changes to what you spend, what you eat, how much you exercise or what you save, you'll always have hurdles to clear. But if you can stay focused and committed, financial freedom waits at the finish line.

J.J. Montanaro is a certified financial planner with USAA, The American Legion's preferred provider of financial services. Submit questions for him online.

 legion.org/usaa/focusonfinances

PERSONAL FINANCE

Retirement shortfalls

62 Percent of Americans who say they "need to catch up and build up their nest eggs"

73 Percent of Generation Xers (ages 39 to 53) who say they need to make up ground on retirement savings

66 Percent of millennials (ages 23 to 38) who say they need to make up ground on retirement savings

51 Percent of baby boomers (ages 55 to 73) who say they need to make up ground on retirement savings

Source: USA TODAY/TO Ameritrade/Harris Polling

GOVERNMENT

Fake news

The Department of Agriculture recently listed Wakanda as a U.S. free-trade partner on the department's online tariff clearinghouse. The webpage reported that the United States and Wakanda trade ducks, donkeys and dairy products. The problem, as the BBC reports, is that Wakanda is the fictional East African home country of superhero Black Panther – a Marvel Comics creation. "A USDA spokesperson said the Kingdom of Wakanda was added to the list by accident during a staff test."

The mistake was discovered by Francis Tseng, a software engineer who was researching agriculture-related tariffs. Wakanda was removed from the website after media contacted USDA officials about its inclusion in the tariff-tracking clearinghouse.



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How to submit a reunion

The American Legion Magazine publishes reunion notices for veterans. Send notices to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: Reunions, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206**, fax (317) 630-1280, e-mail reunions@legion.org or submit information via our website, www.legion.org/reunions.

Include the branch of service and complete name of the group, no abbreviations, with your request. The listing also should include the reunion dates and city, along with a contact name, telephone number and e-mail address. Listings are publicized free of charge.

Your notice will appear on our Web site within a week and will remain available online until the final day of your reunion. Upon submission, please allow three months for your reunion to be published in print. **Due to the large number of reunions, The American Legion Magazine will publish a group's listing only once a year.**

Notices should be sent at least six months prior to the reunion to ensure timely publication.

Other notices

"In Search Of" is a means of getting in touch with people from your unit to plan a reunion. **We do not publish listings that seek people for interviews, research purposes, military photos or help in filing a VA claim.** Listings must include the name of the unit from which you seek people, the time period and the location, as well as a contact name, telephone number and e-mail address. Send notices to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: "In Search Of," P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206**, fax (317) 630-1280 or e-mail reunions@legion.org.

The magazine will not publish names of individuals, only the name of the unit. Listings are published free of charge.

Life Membership notices are published for Legionnaires who have been awarded life

memberships by their posts. **This does not include a member's own Paid-Up-For-Life membership.** Notices must be submitted on official forms, which may be obtained by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: Life Memberships, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206.**

"Comrades in Distress" listings must be approved by the Legion's Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation division. If you are seeking to verify an injury received during service, contact your Legion department service officer for information on how to publish a notice.

To respond to a "Comrades in Distress" listing, send a letter to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: Comrades in Distress, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206.** Include the listing's CID number in your response.

"Taps" notices are published only for Legionnaires who served as department commanders or national officers.

AIR FORCE / ARMY AIR FORCES

57th TCS, 57th MAS, 57th AS & 57th WPS, Branson, MO, 10/15-18, Woodie Hall, (239) 850-1758, president@57thlumni.com; **67th Tact Recon Wing (All Units)**, Albuquerque, NM, 5/4-7, Marion Edwards, (570) 222-4307, jeeme@nep.net; **510th Buzzards**, Dayton, OH, 9/11-13, Guy Wright, (734) 740-3164, wrightguy15@yahoo.com; **601st Sec Police Sqdn (Sembach AB, Germany, Jan 1965-Dec 1969)**, San Antonio, 6/8-11, Jim Bely, (313) 388-1711, belyjames1947@gmail.com; **Nagoya/Komaki AB, Japan**, San Antonio, 5/17-20, Hugh Greenwood, (515) 289-1951, hl_re_greenwood@mchsi.com

ARMY

1st Bn 40th Field Arty (Vietnam), Mount Pleasant, SC, 6/14-19, James Bishop, (209) 952-0535, james@jabishop.com; **1st Bn 83rd Arty (Vietnam, 1966-1971)**, Colorado Springs, CO, 10/11-14, Bill Taggart, (856) 228-5614, artillery_83rd@yahoo.com; **1st Mil Intel Bn (Air Recon Support)**, San Diego, 5/14-17, Don Skinner, (503) 648-6059, donsk@frontier.com; **2nd Inf Div**, Kansas City, MO, 9/23-27, Bob Haynes, (224) 225-1202, 2idahq@comcast.net; **94th Inf Div WWII Hist Society**, Columbus, OH, 6/10-14, John Clyburn Jr., (908) 781-1406, 94thhistsociety@comcast.net; **205th MP Co (1971-1973)**, Leavenworth, KS, 4/28-30, Larry Grebe, (574) 209-0273, ldgrebe@gmail.com; **A Co 7th Cbt Eng 5th Inf Div (Mech)**, San Antonio, 9/9-13, Thomas Grafton, (314) 416-0535, graftonthomas5@gmail.com; **Delta Trp Blackhawks, 7/1 Air Cav (Vietnam)**, Fort Knox, KY, 5/14-16, Joe Vernengo, (586) 337-3334, vertigo2u@yahoo.com; **Dusters, Quads, Searchlights, Vulcans & HAWKS (Vietnam)**, Norfolk, VA, 6/2-7, Bruce Geiger, (914) 576-1050, bmgeiger@aol.com; **HQ & A Co 4th QM Bn 4th Armd Div (Goppingen, Germany, 1957-1960)**, Pigeon Forge, TN, 6/7-10, Lloyd Harfst, (636) 742-2071, mharfst@charter.net; **Nat' 1 4th Inf (IVY) Div Assn**, Colorado Springs, CO, 6/22-28, Glen "Rusty" Armstrong, (414) 630-2484, ivyleaveseditor@gmail.com; **Vinh Long Outlaw Assn - 62nd Avn Co, A Co 502nd Avn Bn, 175th AHC & Attached Units**, San Antonio, 9/17-21, Bert Rice, (410) 507-3366, bert07@comcast.net

COAST GUARD

Sherman WHEC 720 - 2001 OOH Crew, Reno, NV, 3/26-27, Edward Semler, (240) 305-9348, mkcm378@gmail.com

JOINT

Nebraska Vietnam Vets, Lincoln, NE, 8/13-16, Jaime Obrecht, (402) 435-0454, roy-suzie74@inebraska.com; **Udorn Royal Thai AFB**, Weatherford, TX, 7/9-13, Jerry Long, (817) 673-0459, jclhydsr71bafb@gmail.com

MARINES

3rd Recon Bn, Tucson, AZ, 10/6-11, Floyd Nagler, (952) 440-1553, floydndagler@yahoo.com; **HMM-161 (Korea & Vietnam Eras)**, Reno, NV, 5/14-17, Ronald Winter, (860) 550-3274, rwinterbooks@comcast.net; **MCAS Nam Phong, Thailand, Rose Garden Marines**, Nashville, TN, 6/12-16, Harold Delamater, (845) 297-8865, hgd1025@aol.com; **Mar Corps Eng Assn (MCEA)**, Fredericksburg, VA, 9/17-19, Charlie Cismore, (512) 394-9333, cdismore@charliedismore.com

NAVY

7/17 Air Cav Ruthless Riders & Pale Horse, Gatlinburg, TN, 9/9-13, Joe Wirth, (201) 390-5350; **Ajax AR 6**, Cleveland, 6/7-11, Thomas Judge, (830) 745-2141, tjudge7673@sbcglobal.net; **Bang SS 385**, Arlington, VA, 8/26-30, Eric Ericson, (978) 491-0114, eric735244@aol.com; **Boston CA 69, CAG 1 & SSN 703**, King of Prussia, PA, 7/9-12, Barry Probst, (508) 580-3808, president@ussboston.org; **Bushnell AS 15**, Jacksonville, FL, 4/20-24, Richard Yarman, (614) 517-9271, ryarman1964@gmail.com; **Carpenter DD 825**, New Orleans, 5/14-18, Gary Hogan Miller, (903) 581-4136, garyhoganmiller@sbcglobal.net; **Charles R. Ware DD 865**, Athens, TN, 10/7-11, Frank Biondo, (516) 481-0034, munkb@msn.com; **Cogswell DD 651**, Bellevue, WA, 9/21-23, George Overman, (760) 889-2216, secretary@usscogswell.com; **Denebola AF 56**, Norfolk, VA, 9/11-13, John Train, (631) 786-4529, ussdenebola@aol.com; **DESRON 30**, Mobile, AL, 6/11-13, Richard Myers, (404) 508-3308, ramunlim@yahoo.com; **Destroyer Leader Assn - DL 1, DL 2/DDG 35, DL 3/DDG 36, DL 4, DL 5**, New Orleans, 8/8-15, Mike Bugara, (401) 635-8860, mjbugara@hotmail.com; **Doris Miller DE/FF 1091**, Charlestown, MA, 10/9-11, Warren Smith, (781) 608-9247, millerreuniondeff1091@gmail.com; **Finch DER 328**, Buffalo, NY, 9/21-24, Connie Mauldin, (405) 354-9204, cporettr@cox.net; **Frank Knox DD/DDR 742**, Albuquerque, NM, 9/23-26, Vaughan Kruger, (206) 466-6094, vaughankruger@yahoo.com; **Gregory DD 802**, Long Beach, CA, 4/26-30, Ken Boyer, (651) 633-6247, gloriab13@usfamily.net; **Ingraham DD 694**, Jacksonville, FL, 5/13-17, Gregory Miller, (814) 695-3246, gmamflyer@gmail.com; **John S. McCain, DL 3/DDG 36**, New Orleans, 8/8-15, Pete Peterson, (321) 952-2066, retep401@gmail.com; **Klondike AD/AR 22**, San Diego, 9/11-14, Dennis Case, (309) 299-0275, denniscase@gmail.com; **Litchfield County LST 901**, New Orleans, 8/11-13, Don Lerche, (309) 530-8710, donlerche@yahoo.com; **Mariner/Marlin Org**, Nashville, TN, 5/27-31, Bob Tibbets, (859) 223-7871, bobbt42@twc.com; **Mine Div 113 (Vietnam)**, New Orleans, 10/12-15, Don Hecke, (501) 620-0593, dong9329@hotmail.com; **Mitscher DL 2/DDG 35**, New Orleans, 8/8-15, Gary Marchido, (231) 206-1665, garmarchido@aol.com; **NMCB 62 Seabees**, Gulfport, MS, 4/23-26,

Norm Hahn, (715) 379-8482, normhahnjr@yahoo.com; **Norfolk DL 1**, New Orleans, 8/8-16, Geoffrey Patterson, (910) 984-1184, geoffrey.patterson@yahoo.com; **Norris DD/DDE 859**, Portland, ME, 10/21-25, Edward Mehl, (320) 541-0685, emehl@mchsi.com; **Park County LST 1077**, New Orleans, 8/11-13, Mike Kempf, (317) 490-4229, m.w.kempf@sbcglobal.net; **Raton SS/SSR/AGSS 270**, Tucson, AZ, 8/24-28, Larry Kramer, (360) 697-2842, ldkramer43@hotmail.com; **Robert H. McCard DD 822**, Warwick, RI, 9/16-19, Bernard Norman, (509) 499-2649, cesbernie@yahoo.com; **Salisbury Sound AV 130**, San Diego, 8/24-28, Victor Fischer, (630) 257-2710, duffer664@sbcglobal.net; **Scamp SSN 588**, Rapid City, SD, 5/17-21, Rod Stark, (702) 582-1424, scampreunion2021@virtualmemorypix.net; **Sutter County LST 1150**, New Orleans, 8/11-13, Guy Simmons, (978) 476-3895, guysimmons@aol.com; **Swordfish SSN 579**, San Antonio, 5/7-11, Betty Strong, kevinstrong173@msn.com; **Topeka CLG 8**, New Orleans, 9/21-25, Daniel Moore, (574) 295-5156, dan56619@aol.com; **Wedderburn DD 684**, Bellevue, WA, 9/21-23, George Overman, (760) 889-2216, secretary@usscogswell.com; **Wexford County LST 1168**, New Orleans, 8/11-13, Larry Condra, (314) 604-5221, larrygeec@netscape.net; **Wilhoite DER 397**, Buffalo, NY, 9/21-24, Connie Mauldin, (405) 354-9204, cporettr@cox.net; **Wilkinson DL 5**, New Orleans, 8/8-15, John Lair, (619) 479-7387, hobocamp@aol.com; **YAGRS Assn (Radar Picket Ships AGR 1-16)**, Colorado Springs, CO, 5/19-23, Lee Doyel, (850) 433-6930, yagrs16@cox.net; **Yellowstone AD 27**, Branson, MO, 9/21-23, Karen Bowen, (352) 208-5400, pkbowen@atlanticbb.net

LIFE MEMBERSHIPS

Post 337, GA: Theodore Knechtel

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57th Trans Co (Caserma Ederle, Italy, 1960s & 1970s), Fred Dintino, (215) 643-7970, fdintino@verizon.net

63rd OMS (Norton AFB, CA, 1967-1970), Roger Kosecki, (989) 753-2686

633rd Eng Co LE (Korea, 1967-1970), Joseph Bushika, (413) 663-8710, jbushika3@yahoo.com

AT (TOW) Co 8th Tanks 6th Mar (Desert Shield/Storm, 1990-1991), David Fisher, (619) 786-2846, davidfisherenterprises@gmail.com

HQ & HQ Det 8th Log Cnd (Camp Darby, Livorno, Italy, 1964-1966), Anthony Bassano, (408) 295-1634, abassano@sbcglobal.net

K Co 3rd Bn 5th Rgt 1st Mar Div (An Hoa Cbt Base, Vietnam, 1969-1970), Feliciano Guzman Leo, (860) 232-0279

Leary DD/DDR 879 (1945-1974), Al Redden, (308) 530-1284, alshr@allophe.com

Pit 1061 (MCRD San Diego, Oct 1956-Jan 1957), Arthur Miller, (989) 754-2429

Pit 3013 (Parris Island, SC, July 1967), Harry Hopwood, (352) 493-1392, usmarineck@att.net

San Jacinto Stewards & Steward's Mates
(Pacific, 1942-1945), Xavier Allen, (734) 731-7310, born1690ad@yahoo.com
St. Paul CA 73 (Vietnam, 1969-1970), Les Chadwick, 1127 Mohawk Trail, Shelburne Falls, MA 01370, (413) 489-3079

TAPS

Stephen J. German, Dept. of Michigan. Nat'l Foreign Relations Cncl. Vice Chmn. 2003-2008 and Nat'l Sec. Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1995-1997.

Stephan B. Lopes, Dept. of New Jersey. Dept. Cmdr. 1964-1965.

David L. Morrow, Dept. of Mississippi. Dept. Cmdr. 1966-1967, Nat'l Marksmanship Advisory Memb. 1950-1951, Nat'l Sec. Tng. Cmte. Memb. 1951-1954, Nat'l Counter-Subversive Activ. Cmte. Memb. 1958-1959, Nat'l Distinguished Guests Cmte. Memb. 1955-1956, Nat'l Endowment Fund Corp. Memb. 1967-1970, Nat'l Internal Affairs Cmsn. Vice Chmn. 1957-1958 and Nat'l Mbrshp. & Post Activ. Cmte. Memb. 1954-1955, 1961-1964 and 1965-1966.

Harley W. Ray, Dept. of Oregon. Nat'l Vice Cmdr. 2008-2009, Dept. Cmdr. 1999-2000, Nat'l Counter-Subversive Activ. Cmte. Memb. 1994-2006, Nat'l Veterans Employment & Education Cmsn. Memb. 2006-2008 and Nat'l Conv. Resolutions Asgnmt. Cmte. Memb. 2011-2014.

Duane E. "Bud" Reddenpenning, Dept. of Minnesota. Dept. Cmdr. 1986-1987, Nat'l Homeland Sec. & Civil Preparedness Cmte. Memb. 1988-1991, Nat'l Distinguished Guests Cmte. Vice Chmn. 1995-2005 and Nat'l Veterans Affairs & Rehab. Nat'l Cmdr.'s Rep. 1991-1995.

Cleve Rice, Dept. of Idaho. Dept. Cmdr. 2001-2002, Nat'l Exec. Cmte. Alt. Memb. 2004-2006, Nat'l Americanism Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1996-2005 and 2008-2011, Nat'l Americanism Cmsn. Memb. 2005-2006 and 2011-2017, Nat'l Exec. Cmte. Memb. 2006-2008, Nat'l American Legion Magazine Cmsn. Liaison Cmte. Memb. 2007-2008 and Nat'l Veterans Affairs & Rehab. Cmsn. Liaison Cmte. Memb. 2006-2007.

Frank D. Slavens, Dept. of Texas. Nat'l Americanism Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1976-1988, Nat'l Foreign Relations Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1971-1972 and Nat'l Mbrshp. & Post Activ. Cmte. Memb. 1972-1976.

Vernon A. Useldinger, Dept. of North Dakota. Dept. Cmdr. 1981, Nat'l Exec. Cmte. Alt. Memb. 2003-2004, Nat'l Americanism Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1965-1966, Nat'l Foreign Relations Cncl. Vice

Chmn. 1988-1996, Nat'l Mbrshp. & Post Activ. Cmte. Consultant 1966-1967, Nat'l Mbrshp. & Post Activ. Cmte. Advisory Board Memb. 1972-1977 and Nat'l Sec. Cmsn. Memb. 2003-2006.

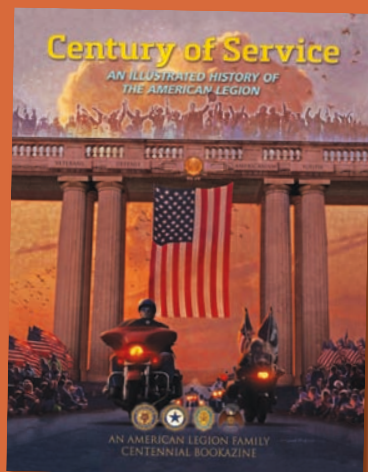
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I hate when people use big words just to make themselves look perspicacious.

A WOMAN told the doctor, “For eight months, my husband has thought he’s a lawnmower.”

“That’s disturbing,” the doctor replied. “Why didn’t you bring him in sooner?”

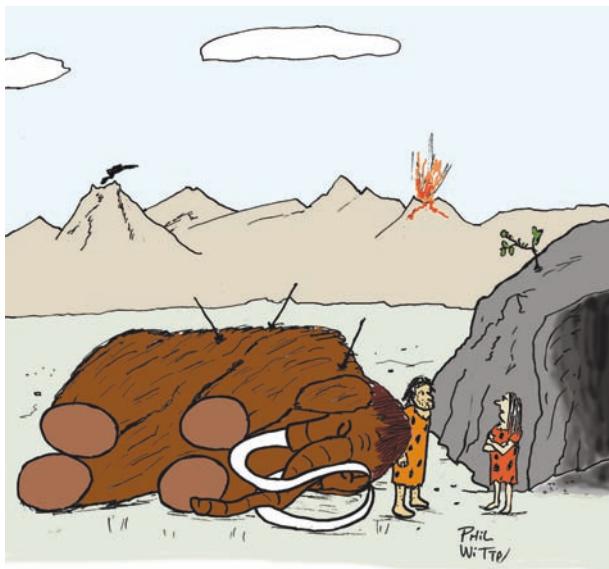
“Our neighbor just returned him yesterday.”

MY EYES are so bad that I can’t read menus anymore. I have to order from the pictures. One time, I ordered the front of the restaurant.

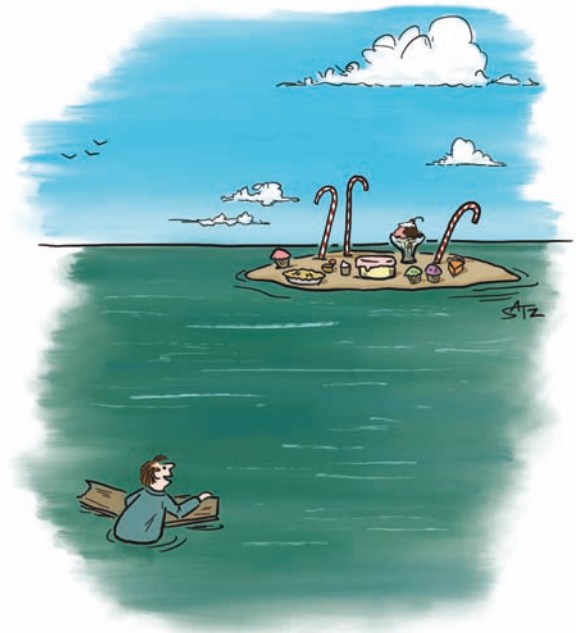
MY THERAPIST says I have a preoccupation with vengeance. We’ll see about that.

JONES AND SMITH had been in business together, but no longer. Jones made the announcement first: “The co-partnership heretofore existing is now dissolved. Those who owe the firm will settle with me, and those who the firm owes will settle with Smith.”

THERE HAD BEEN an epidemic of colds in the town, and the sleep-deprived doctor called on a patient suffering from pneumonia. As he leaned over to hear the patient’s respiration, he asked him to keep count. In fact, the doctor was so fatigued that he fell asleep with his ear on the sick man’s chest. When he woke up, the first thing he heard was, “ ... ten thousand seventy-six, ten thousand seventy-seven”



“That’s a mammoth. I told you to bring home a mastodon.”



“Sweet! A dessert island!”



“This isn’t exactly the kind of teamwork I was trying to promote with this corporate retreat.”

A ROMAN SOLDIER walks into a bar, holds up two fingers and says, “Five beers, please.”

I THOUGHT air was free. Then I bought a bag of potato chips.

SURE, money can’t buy you happiness, but I’d still feel a lot more comfortable crying in a new BMW than on a bike.

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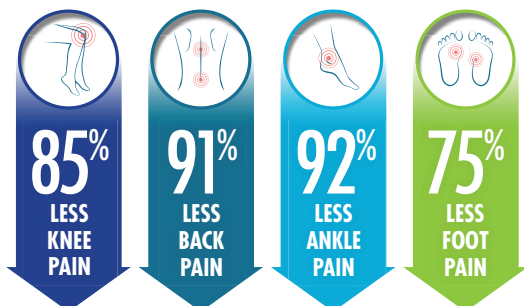
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